Annual Report:
1 November 2022 - 31 October 2023

The Polar Citizen Science Collective

Registered charity number: 1191998

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered on 27 October 2020

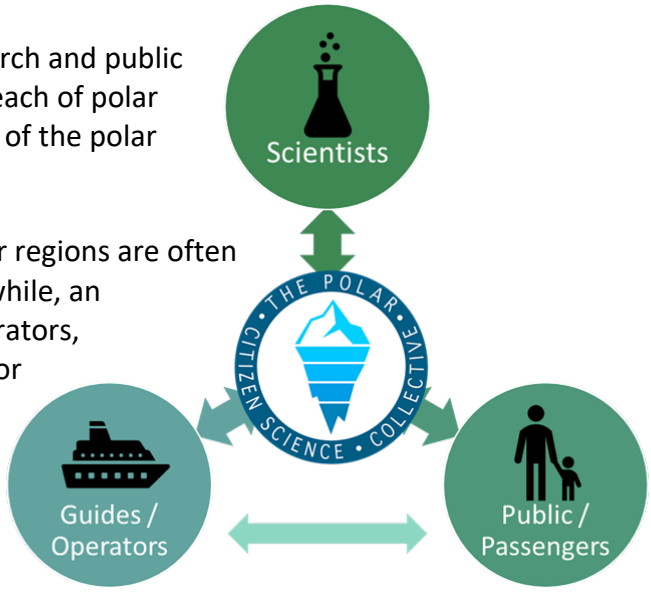
Registered Address: 27 Oaktree Crescent
Cockermouth
CA13 9HR

WHO WE ARE

The Organization

The objects of the The Polar Citizen Science Collective (also referred to informally as the Polar Collective (PC)) are, for the public benefit, to advance and promote scientific knowledge, understanding and education on any aspect of polar regions and related areas, in particular but not exclusively, environmental protection and improvement, by initiating, facilitating, co-ordinating and encouraging international scientific research activity in polar regions. It is governed by a trust deed.

The Polar Collective creates opportunities for research and public education through citizen science, leveraging the reach of polar travelers to enhance understanding and protection of the polar regions.



High costs and the complexity of access to the polar regions are often prohibitive to Arctic and Antarctic research. Meanwhile, an extensive network of ship and land-based tour operators, carrying engaged polar travellers is under-utilized for the purposes of science.

We aim to meet the needs of the polar science community by engaging travellers in data collection projects. We focus primarily on ship-based tourism but also aim to engage with land-based operations. While citizen science is a key method by which we aim to collect data, we do not let this focus prevent us from supporting other worthy scientific projects that could be carried out aboard polar tourism vessels, whether by carrying trained scientists and observers or by instrumentation of the ships themselves.

The primary ways in which we support citizen science is by creating training materials, promoting projects to tour operators, explaining how to integrate these projects into daily operations and by providing coordination between data collection teams and project leads. We also undertake outreach to the science community to advertise the existence of what has the potential to be the greatest oceanic research fleet on the planet, and to generate new data collection projects. Finally, we work directly with scientists to assist them in creating projects suitable for placement within polar tour operations.

The trustees believe that they have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the commission in exercising their powers or duties.

The People

Many people make up the Polar Collective including Trustees, our Secretariat, Advisors and Friends of the organization. An up-to-date list is maintained online at the following web address: https://polarcollective.org/team

The Polar Collective is guided by a board of trustees. This comprises a varying number of people who undertake strategic planning and high-level decision making for the Polar Collective. They have varied backgrounds comprising polar guiding, governance of polar tourism, science, and the charitable and commercial sectors. All have a keen personal interest in polar regions and their protection.

The Board

The board was made up of the following members during this financial period:

- Nick Lambert (from 24 July 2023) – Chair of the Board
- Laura Smith (until 24 July 2023) – Chair of the Board
- Dave Finnegan
- Anna Kettley
- Alex Cowan (Treasurer)
- Amanda Lynnes (until 5 April 2023)
- Stephanie Martin (from 5 April 2023)

During this period two members of the board chose to retire and were replaced.

Laura Smith stood down as Chair of the Board after three years in the role. She took the Polar Collective through the crucial period of incorporating the organisation and registering it with the Charity Commission, with legally formalising the relationship of Polar Collective with polar tour operators, and overseeing the creation of the training platform.

The role of Chair has been filled by Rear Admiral Nick Lambert. A former captain of HMS Endurance, the Royal Navy's ice patrol vessel, Nick concluded a long naval operational career as the UK National Hydrographer in December 2012. Nick also chairs the James Caird Society and is a trustee of Seas Your Future.

Amanda Lynnes stood down, also after three years in the role. She brought important connections to Antarctic science and also to the operators of polar tourism, sitting on the Secretariat of IAATO (International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators).

Steph Martin brings a background in marine policy and marine mammal science. She has worked as the environment and conservation policy officer for the government of Tristan da Cunha and today is the South Georgia whale project manager at British Antarctic Survey, based in Cambridge, UK. She has in the past worked within polar tourism and is experienced in the use of polar tourism as a platform of opportunity, and so brings a vital understanding of our mission as well as of the worlds of science and policy.

We continue to seek out new talent for the board of trustees, particularly where we can secure greater diversity of background, skills and outlook.

In addition to the board, the Polar Collective is made up of several other groups and individuals:

Secretariat

- Annette Bombosch
- Conny Bartl
- Liz Teague (on maternity leave during this period)

Secretariat members carry out the vital day to day administrative and technical work required by the Polar Collective, such as producing contracts, creating documents and working with scientific leads and polar tour operators. They report to the board and in addition their advice is sought when appropriate before decisions are made due to their crucial role in the organisation. They bring an understanding of both the scientific process and also polar operations, creating the special skill set that the Polar Collective uses to marry science and polar tourism. Secretariat members are paid on a contract basis when this work is required by the Polar Collective.

Friends and Supporters

Friends and supporters make up an informal group of advisors or people working in the same field with overlapping aims. It consists of a mixture of experts on polar tourism operations, polar science and citizen science. Their expertise is sought on an ad-hoc basis, for example when researching or developing new projects. They do not possess any voting rights.

- Audrey Taylor
- Penny Wagner
- Ben Wallis
- Allison Cusick
- Susan Adie

WHAT WE'VE DONE

In the previous financial years we identified several priorities. Below we briefly summarise our ambitions and what we have done in pursuit of these goals during this financial year:

1. **Create a Principal Investigator Agreement, governing our relationship with researchers.**

   This project was initiated, with a document created and discussions undertaken with PIs. It remains in production.

2. **Create new partnerships with researchers and be involved in the development of new projects.**

   While no new projects were vetted, the **South Georgia Beetles Project**, which was vetted last year, was rolled out as a test project for the 2022-23 Antarctic season. This will generate data that will enhance our ability to map the distribution of both native and non-native invertebrate species, understand how species interact with other invertebrates and with flowering plants and also monitor the possible transport and arrival of new non-native invertebrates.
   In addition, initial exploratory calls were held with PIs with a view to vetting and rolling out three new projects in the future.
   a. **Increased fundraising, both through polar tourism operators and through other avenues.**

   We have seen an increase in income as tourism continues to recover from the pandemic. We completed our fundraising review and are working towards implementing its recommendations.
3. **Operator development and support**
   a. We conducted Pre-Season, Mid-Season and End Of Season calls with operators, allowing us to understand successes and challenges and be able to adjust training or procedures for the future and to better support operators in their efforts to carry out quality science.
   b. We explored potential new partnerships with two new tour operators.
4. **Project development and support**
   We conducted End Of Season check ins with Principal Investigators to ensure protocols were being followed correctly and satisfactory data were being collected. We also updated the training platform to reflect developments in project protocols and in response to feedback from guides and operators.

THE TRAINING PLATFORM

The training platform has proved to be a vital resource in this, the first full year of its use. During the period 07-Oct-2022 to 28-Aug-2023, 208 guides from one of 10 partnered operators registered with the training platform. Of these, 101 completed at least one training course.

The projects supported by Polar Collective are:

Aurorasaurus: This award-winning project tracks auroras around the world via reports on its website and on Twitter. Using aurora-related tweets and reports, it generates a real-time, global map of the Lights. Citizen scientists then log in and verify the tweets. Each verified tweet and report serves as a valuable data point for scientists to analyze and incorporate into space weather models.

South Georgia Big Seaweed Search: South Georgia is far from many human impacts, but its marine biodiversity faces threats from rapid climate change (ocean warming and acidification) and invasive species (including seaweeds). Seaweeds, many of which exist on the edge of their distributional range here, are indicators of environmental change and their responses to disturbance can resonate throughout entire ecosystems, with knock-on effects for fisheries and tourism. This project aims to survey the distribution of key species along South Georgia's coastline, to assess their health and susceptibility to climate change, and to detect the arrival and spread of non-native species

Happywhale: this project was launched in 2015 and is a platform collecting photos of marine mammals taken by citizen scientists from all over the world for photo-ID purposes. So far Happywhale has recorded over 220,000 whale encounters from over 9,000 participants worldwide, with over 5,300 individual cetaceans identified in the Antarctic and 1,400 in the Arctic. Photos submitted to Happywhale are shared with a large network of researchers to improve our understanding of marine mammals. The images provide valuable information on, for example, whale migration patterns and population status. These studies are becoming increasingly important with the ongoing recovery of whale species since the end of commercial whaling and current conservation issues such as ship strikes, entanglement in fishing gear and population responses to climate change.

GLOBE Clouds: The GLOBE Clouds project was launched in 1994 and compares cloud observations taken by citizen scientists from the ground to information retrieved from satellites.

So far, over 1 million cloud observations have been reported from all over the world, yet observations from the polar regions are still limited with only ~1,000 submissions to date. Despite the many satellites that are continuously monitoring clouds, it's tricky to capture the extent of these interactions with satellites alone. This is why it's crucial for researchers to have ground truth data gathered from the Earth's surface by citizen scientists. These observations give insight into how clouds are changing throughout the season and ultimately, what impact this might have on our changing climate.

Secchi Disk Study: This is a global citizen science study of marine phytoplankton. It was launched in 2013 and has so far resulted in over 3,000 observations from around the world. The aim is to increase the data collected from the oceans to compare to historical Secchi Disk data. This will help expand the Secchi Disk study's long-term dataset enabling scientists to better understand changes in the ocean's phytoplankton.

Southern Ocean Seabird Surveys: These were launched in 2015 and are studying the distribution of birds at sea. So far, hundreds of observations from the Southern Ocean and Antarctica have been gathered to add to the existing collection of bird data from around the world in the eBird database. The project is building a long-term ecological monitoring programme of seabirds in the Southern Ocean and along the Antarctic Peninsula. These recordings help researchers understand how birds use oceanic habitat, to discover new details about the lives of these remote species, and ultimately how their behaviour and populations might be changing as a result of climate change.

FjordPhyto: This project started in 2016 and investigates how melting glaciers are affecting the phytoplankton communities along the western Antarctic Peninsula. Phytoplankton play a critical role in drawing carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and contribute to over half of the Earth's oxygen. Being at the base of the food web, they provide important food for species such as Antarctic krill and ultimately penguins, seals and whales. The Antarctic Peninsula is one of the fastest warming regions on our planet resulting in more and more freshwater flowing into the coastal fjord areas. Scientists therefore need to understand what impacts this will have on the phytoplankton communities and the wider food web.

CONFERENCES

We attended:
The Southern Ocean Observing System (**SOOS**) Symposium 14-18 Aug 2023, delivering a remote video on our work.

Tourism Monitoring Workshop 10-12 Oct 2023, delivering a keynote presentation.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Increasing activity in the expedition cruise industry post COVID has allowed us to build our reserves. This increasing level of financial security puts the organisation on a solid footing for the future and it has been identified that increased spending in pursuit of our goals would be appropriate in the following years.

Funding was received with gratitude from:

Aurora Expeditions

Bark Europa

Cheeseman's Ecology Safaris

Freestyle Adventure Travel

HX Hurtigruten Expeditions

Intrepid Travel

Polar Latitudes

Ponant

Quixote Expeditions

Swan Hellenic

Viking Expeditions

Internal Financial Controls

A review was conducted of internal financial controls. Reference was made to Charity Commission guidance and advice when performing the review, and any areas of weakness were identified and addressed, with enhanced trustee oversight of outgoing payments and more regular financial updates to the board.

In addition to this financial policy, in line with Charity Commission advice, a reserves policy was created:

Reserves Policy

It has been decided that our reserves policy remains appropriate and it has been agreed to leave it unchanged but with the intention to make it relevant to our increasing income and costs in the following financial year.

$3000 USD/mo is required to keep operating at a normal level.

Given funds are received annually at the most frequent from each source, an unexpected loss of funding may require significant funds to cover its loss and give time to replace this source of income. For this reason we believe that 4 months of expenditure would be prudent ie $12,000 USD. It is our aim to increase this to 6 months in the next 2-3 years.

When and How Reserves May be Spent

These reserve funds may be used for essential day-to-day operating expenses. Should the Polar Collective begin using its reserves in this way there should be a review by the Board of Trustees to identify and discuss the reason for this use of reserves and how to ensure that they are replenished as soon as possible by either increasing funding or reducing expenditure. The board would also discuss whether it will be necessary to wrap up the Polar Collective.

Review

This reserves policy should be reviewed every year.

THE FUTURE

In the next financial year our focus will be:

1. Continuing to maintain the training platform and our relationships with tour operators and with principal investigators.
2. We intend to rebrand Polar Collective as part of a longer term effort to assist in fundraising and to increase awareness of our existence.

This report is approved by the Board of Trustees who, on this date, are:

- Nick Lambert (Chair)
- Anna Kettley
- Alex Cowan (Treasurer)
- Dave Finnegan
- Stephanie Martin
- Judson Bartlett

On: 30 August 2024

Signed



Nick Lambert, Chair

Polar Citizen Science Collective

Unaudited Accounts

31 October 2023

Polar Citizen Science Collective
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Polar Citizen Science Collective
Business Information

Accountants
Oaktree Accountancy (Cockermouth) Limited
27 Oaktree Crescent
Cockermouth
Cumbria
CA13 9HR

Bankers
HSBC PLC
1 Forge Corner, Enderby Road
Blaby
LE8 3FZ

Solicitors
Stone King LLP
Boundary House
91 Charterhouse Street
London
EC1M 6HR

Registered Office
27 Oaktree Crescent
Cockermouth
Cumbria
CA13 9HR

Registered Charity Number
1191998

Polar Citizen Science Collective

Approval statement

I approve the accounts which comprise of the Profit and Loss Account, the Balance Sheet and the related notes. I acknowledge my responsibility for the accounts, including the appropriateness of the applicable financial reporting framework as set out in note 1, and for providing Oaktree Accountancy (Cockermouth) Limited with all information and explanations necessary for their compilation.

Mr. Alex Cowan

25 July 2024

Polar Citizen Science Collective
Company number CE023108

Chartered Accountants' report to Mr. Alex Cowan on the unaudited accounts of Polar Citizen Science Collective

In accordance with the engagement letter dated 7 November 2019, we have prepared for your approval the accounts of Polar Citizen Science Collective for the year ended 31 October 2023 which comprise of the Profit and Loss Account, the Balance Sheet and the related notes from the entity's accounting records and from information and explanations you have given to us.

As a practising member firm of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), we are subject to its ethical and other professional requirements which are detailed at icaew.com/membershandbook.

Our work has been undertaken in accordance with ICAEW Technical Release TECH08/16AAF.

Oaktree Accountancy (Cockermouth) Limited
Accountants
27 Oaktree Crescent
Cockermouth
Cumbria
CA13 9HR

25 July 2024

Polar Citizen Science Collective
Profit and Loss Account
for the year ended 31 October 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
Income	68,458	59,672
Direct expenditure	47,219	46,648
Gross profit	21,239	13,024
Other business income	-	2
Expenses		
Telephone, fax, stationery and other office costs	2,528	1,888
Bank, credit card and other finance charges	1,210	(2,778)
Accountancy, legal and other professional fees	806	480
	4,544	(410)
Profit before tax	16,695	13,436
Corporation tax	-	-
Profit after tax	16,695	13,436
Gross margin %	**31%**	**22%**
Corporation tax payable 31 July	-	

Polar Citizen Science Collective
Balance Sheet
as at 31 October 2023

	Notes	2023 £		2022 £	
Current assets					
Prepayments		951		719	
Bank/building society balances		30,291		20,408	
		31,242		21,127	
Current liabilities					
Corporation tax		-		-	
Accruals		491		7,071	
		491		7,071	
Net current assets			30,751		14,056
Net assets			30,751		14,056
Capital account					
Balance at start of period			14,056		620
Net profit			16,695		13,436
			30,751		14,056

Polar Citizen Science Collective
Notes to the Accounts
for the year ended 31 October 2023

1 Accounting basis

The accounts have been compiled on a basis that enables profits to be calculated in accordance with UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice and that provides sufficient and relevant information to enable the completion of a tax return.

2 Profit and loss account analysis

	2023 £	2022 £
Income		
Grants receivable	5,391	38,999
Donations	63,067	20,673
	68,458	59,672
Direct expenditure		
Happywhales	-	63
Other subcontractors	47,219	46,585
	47,219	46,648
Other business income		
Interest receivable	-	2
Telephone, fax, stationery and other office costs		
Insurance	741	727
Software	1,787	1,161
	2,528	1,888
Bank, credit card and other finance charges		
Foreign exchange losses / (gains)	1,079	(3,089)
Bank charges	131	311
	1,210	(2,778)
Accountancy, legal and other professional fees		
Accountants fees	480	480
Subscriptions	32	-
Advertising and PR	294	-
	806	480

Oaktree Accountancy

01900 268086 and 07889 181080
27 Oaktree Crescent Cockermouth CA13 9HR
www.oakacc.co.uk

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Polar Citizen Science Collective

I report on the accounts of the collective for the period from 1 November 2022 to 31 October 2023.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed. The collective's gross income was below £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by:

- Being independent of the collective and its trustees.
- Having qualified as a Chartered Accountant on 1 December 1991.
- Having relevant professional experience since 1991, including having been Secretary of Copeland Mind, having held various trustee roles in Cockermouth Round Table and other organisations which report to the Charities Commission.

Having satisfied myself that the collective is not subject to audit under UK law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act.
- Follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.
- State whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the collective and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the following requirements have not been met:

- To keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act.
- To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act, or

2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Chris MacLeod ACA ICPA (Fellow)
Oaktree Accountancy (Cockermouth) Limited

Date: 20 November 2023