THE POLAR COLLECTIVE

protect the poles together

Annual Report for period

1 November 2023 - 31 October 2024

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

Our objects 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. The charity is governed by a trust deed.

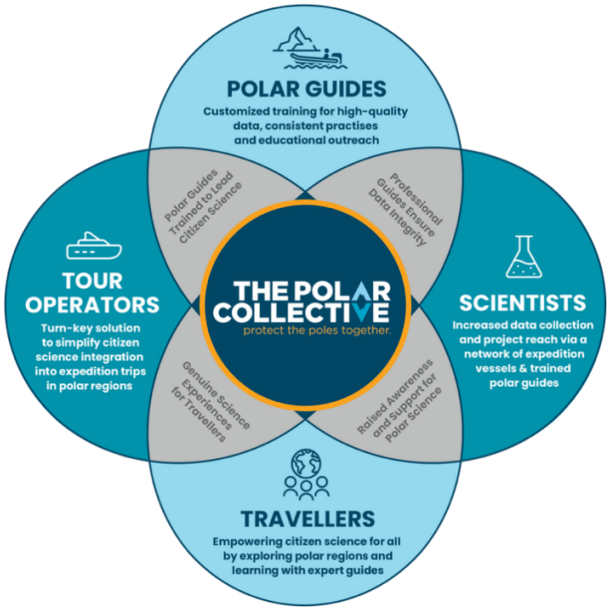
The Polar Citizen Science Collective (also known as the Polar Collective) unites tour operators, scientists, polar guides and travellers to enable research and education through citizen science. High costs and the complexity of access to the polar regions are often prohibitive to Arctic and Antarctic 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 support the needs of the polar science community by engaging travellers in data collection projects.

SOUTHERN OCEAN OBSERVING SYSTEM

The Polar Collective is endorsed by the Southern Ocean Observing System. The SOOS mission is to facilitate the collection and delivery of essential observations on dynamics and change of Southern Ocean systems to all international stakeholders (researchers, governments, industries), through design, advocacy and implementation of cost-effective observing and data delivery systems.

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 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 on our webpage.

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 of Trustees

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

- Nick Lambert – Chair of the Board
- Anna Kettley
- Alex Cowan
- Stephanie Martin
- Dave Finnegan
- Judson Bartlett (from 8 December 2023)

Judson Bartlett is a strategic communications consultant specializing in nonprofit organizations. He has served on multiple non-profit boards since 2007 in executive positions and as a committee chair for strategy and governance and so brings an enormous amount of experience to the board in the area of non-profit strategy and governance.

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

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 of trustees 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. They do not possess any voting rights.

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.

- Laura Smith (ex-Chair)
- 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 continues in development.

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

   Initial exploratory discussions were held with PIs for three new projects. Development of these projects is ongoing and it is hoped that they will develop into fully fledged projects in time.

   The Antarctic Snow Algae Study's development was completed, with the project graduating from its test phase to a fully fledged project integrated into the training platform ready for the 2024-25 Antarctic season. An app-based data collection process was developed and implemented.

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 signed created agreements with one new tour operator.
   c. We explored a potential new partnership with one new tour operator.

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, and all projects received a training platform update.

   The South Georgia Seaweed project was upgraded with app-based data collection.

   In addition, development work was done in support of Happywhale's Advanced Training protocols, with an additional training module developed and added.

5. **Rebranding** was identified as a need in pursuit of furthering our fundraising goals and also our reach and visibility. A new logo was completed in time for the start of the 2024-25 Antarctic season, with a website overhaul still to be completed.

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 1 November 2023 to 17 October 2024, 215 guides from one of 10 partnered operators were registered with the training platform. Of these, 146 completed at least one training course. This is an approximately 45% increase in the number of newly-trained guides compared to the same period the previous year.

The training platform received a full overhaul, and projects were updated to reflect new protocols. The projects supported by Polar Collective via the training platform are:

The Antarctic Snow Algae Study: This study aims to create a baseline database documenting the temporal and spatial occurrence of snow algae along the Antarctic Peninsula. Snow algae play a significant role in the environment by increasing the absorption of sunlight leading to an enhanced melting of snow. There is strong evidence that warming Antarctic temperatures may be intensifying their growth. Researchers often rely on satellite images to monitor snow algae, but clouds in the Antarctic sky frequently inhibit clear images.

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.

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

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.

In addition to the above, we support one project which does not sit within the training platform:

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.

CONFERENCES

Polar Collective was represented by trustee Steph Martin at the 19-23 August 2024 SCAR conference in Pucón, Chile. A flyer was created to raise awareness of the opportunities we can offer to polar scientists.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Funding was received with gratitude from:

Antarpply Expeditions

Aurora Expeditions

Bark Europa

Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris

Freestyle Adventure Travel

HX Hurtigruten Expeditions

Intrepid Travel

Polar Latitudes

Quixote Expeditions

Swan Hellenic

Swoop Adventures

Viking Expeditions

Internal Financial Controls

Our internal financial controls were reviewed and amended in July 2024.

Reserves Policy

Our reserves policy was also reviewed in July 2024. It has been decided that our reserves policy remains appropriate and it has been agreed to leave it unchanged but with the continuing intention to keep it relevant to our increasing income and costs in following financial years.

Given the continuing situation where funds are received annually at the most frequent from

each source, 4 months of expenditure in reserve is considered prudent. It is our aim to increase this to 6 months, but in the near future we do not wish for this aspiration to limit the development required to fulfil our public benefit objects.

When and How Reserves May be Spent

Our reserve funds may be used for essential day-to-day operating expenses, with none of our reserves constituted by restricted funds. 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. Increasing our visibility through a developing marketing and communications strategy.
2. Strengthening funding by creating fundraising initiatives and securing a fundraising expert to add to our team.
3. Providing the highest quality services by ensuring governance compliance, continuing to maintain the training platform and by pursuing additional data collection projects.
4. Expanding our reach through improved communication with our partners and ensuring that we are creating good relationships.
5. Maintaining a healthy capital reserve.

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

- Nick Lambert (Chair)
- Anna Kettley
- Alex Cowan (Treasurer)
- Judson Bartlett

On: 8 August 2025

Signed



Nick Lambert, Chair

Draft 11/12/24

Polar Citizen Science Collective

Unaudited Accounts

31 October 2024

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

31 August 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 2024 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

31 August 2024

Polar Citizen Science Collective
Profit and Loss Account
for the year ended 31 October 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
Income	81,958	68,458
Direct expenditure	53,629	47,219
Gross profit	28,329	21,239
Expenses		
Telephone, fax, stationery and other office costs	6,904	2,528
Bank, credit card and other finance charges	2,717	1,210
Accountancy, legal and other professional fees	267	806
	9,888	4,544
Profit before tax	18,441	16,695
Corporation tax	-	-
Profit after tax	18,441	16,695
Gross margin %	**35%**	**31%**
Corporation tax payable 31 July	-	

Polar Citizen Science Collective
Balance Sheet
as at 31 October 2024

	Notes		2024		2023
			£		£
Current assets					
Prepayments		-		951	
Bank/building society balances		49,192		30,291	
		49,192		31,242	
Current liabilities					
Corporation tax		-		-	
Accruals		-		491	
		-		491	
Net current assets			49,192		30,751
Net assets			49,192		30,751
Capital account					
Balance at start of period			30,751		14,056
Net profit			18,441		16,695
			49,192		30,751

Polar Citizen Science Collective
Notes to the Accounts
for the year ended 31 October 2024

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

	2024 £	2023 £
Income		
Grants receivable	61,542	5,391
Operator fees	4,196	-
Donations	16,220	63,067
	81,958	68,458
Direct expenditure		
Subcontractors	53,629	47,219
	53,629	47,219
Telephone, fax, stationery and other office costs		
Insurance	-	741
Training	3,621	-
Postage	112	-
Stationery and printing	97	-
Sundry expenses	3	-
Software	3,071	1,787
	6,904	2,528
Bank, credit card and other finance charges		
Foreign exchange losses / (gains)	1,785	1,079
Bank charges	932	131
	2,717	1,210
Accountancy, legal and other professional fees		
Accountants fees	150	480
Subscriptions	117	32
Advertising and PR	-	294
	267	806

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 2023 to 31 October 2024.

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: 11 January 2025