



WildCookham CIO Annual Report 2023

Our activities through this year followed the pattern of the previous year, with continuing work on our various projects and the now established range of walks and talks aimed at broadening interest in our local wildlife. Financially the year was dominated by our biggest event to date – *Our Changing Earth*, a festival of arts and nature staged in June over a long weekend at the John Lewis Partnership Odney Club in Cookham. Visited by just under 1000 people, it comprised art, creative sessions, talks, music and was generally acclaimed a great success. It also resulted in a significant financial contribution to WildCookham as well as to two other charities supported by the event. Our thanks are due to Leysa Henderson, who came up with the idea for the festival and masterminded the whole event.

Our several 'hands on' projects continued to engage our volunteers. On-going surveys of the Water Voles released in previous years continued, included work with South East Rivers Trust who conducted surveys of our waterways for South East Water. We also benefitted from the support of the local paddleboarders who enabled us to extend our mink monitoring work. We undertook substantial clearance work on the Marsh Meadow pond, as well as holding a pond-dipping session in the summer. Volunteers continued regular maintenance work at the Harris Woodbridge Reserve. We thank Mike Day, in particular, who hung up his secateurs at the end of the year after managing our work at the Reserve since WildCookham took on responsibility in 2017.

John Southgate's team of volunteers carried out work in the Spring and Autumn to continue our programme of 'Wilding the Commons'. This included extending the clearance and seeding on Cookham Moor and Odney Common, the activity assisted by the presence of employees of local accountancy practice MHA: they enabled us to achieve a lot whilst also gaining the benefit of fresh air and exercise.

Survey work also continued across various taxonomic groups and species – including damselflies, moths, Glow worms, Grey Partridge – and in several locations/habitats. Our thanks to Brian Clews for being the driving force behind this. Brian also authored short articles about our activities to be shared with the residents of St Benoit, Cookham's twinned village in France.

The Wild Gardens Awards gained new momentum, as the project came under a common umbrella for the Royal Borough as a whole, with the scheme now part of the Borough's Biodiversity Action Plan. We have also been working on reinvigorating our work with schools, aiming to find ways to engage which can fit easily into the packed school curriculum.

We continued to play an important part in local natural environment planning, working with our fellow Wild groups and the RBWM Natural Environment team. We also continued to serve on the working group for the Cookham Neighbourhood Plan, and gained acceptance of a more integrated environmental content for the plan which awaits local adoption. We welcomed the initiative to

develop a Local Nature Recovery Network Strategy, led for Berkshire by WildCookham trustee Rosie Street. Linked to this we were pleased, at year end, to receive news of funding for the 'cluster' project we have initiated bringing together six landowners to the south of Cookham alongside the River Thames. We look forward to working with our local wildlife trust (BBOWT) to develop options for cooperation between the landowners leading to ecological improvement.

The financial report shows the impact, in particular, of the *Our Changing Earth* event. Much of the revenue for this came into the previous 2022 accounts, while much of the expenditure fell in the current year. A more realistic year on year comparison is with the end 2021 balance at £10,140 compared with the 2023 year end balance of £13,815.

We enter our tenth anniversary year in 2024, able to look back on solid achievements and with the prospect of adding some strategic larger-scale projects to our successful community activities. The past few months have also involved planning for a Big Wild Weekend event in June 2024 as part of our anniversary celebrations.

Our thanks, as ever, go to my fellow trustees and especially to our committee and project leaders who are the backbone of our group. They are supported by the large number of local residents who follow our activities and many of whom give their time, ideas and energy to our work. We also say a special thank you to our honorary treasurer, Geoff Elton, who retired from the role at end of the year. Our sincere thanks to them all.

On behalf of the Trustees:

Lars Ahlgren, Mike Copland, Lynne Peperell, Rosie Street

February 2024

WILDCOOKHAM STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT

	FOR THE YEAR TO 31st December 2022		FOR THE YEAR TO 31st December 2023	
	RECEIPTS		RECEIPTS	
	£	£	£	£
Donations – non specific	2,462		578	See P.2
Camera Hire	0		0	
Fund Raising Activities	402		814	See P.2
		2,864		1,392
Project Funds Received:				
Wild Weekend	0		450	
Harris Woodbridge Reserve	225		225	
Seeding Project Donations	0		0	
Water Voles Donations	6,743		0	
Wild SL6 Donations	2,350		-91	
Nesting Boxes Donations	500		91	
Our Changing Earth Grant/Sales	13,086		7,007	
		22,904		7,682
TOTAL FUNDS RECEIVED	£	25,768	£	9,074
	EXPENDITURE			
Cost of fund raising	36		432	See P.2
Admin cost	451		702	See P.2
Charitable donations made	0		91	See P.2
Potential Project Costs	158		816	See P.2
		645		2,041
Harris Woodbridge Reserve	48		25	
Seeding Project	76		294	
Water Voles	9,360		539	
Wild SL6	991		91	
Nesting Boxes	1,591		-91	
Our Changing Earth	549		14,618	
Wild Weekend	0		390	
		12,615		15,866
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£	13,260	£	17,907
CLOSING BANK BALANCE	£	22,648	13,739	at bank
		(Opening 01/01/22 was £10,140)	76	cash in hand
			£	13,815
				(Opening 01/01/23 was £22,648)
FUND RESERVES AVAILABLE @ 31.12.22	£			
General Fund - at bank	5,085		4,359	
- cash in hand			76	4,435
Harris Woodbridge Reserve	530			730
Seeding Project	499			205
Water Voles	1,986			1,447
Wild SL6	2,011			2,011
Nesting Boxes	0			0
Our Changing Earth	12,537			4,927
Wild Weekend	0			60
TOTAL	£	22,648	TOTAL	£
				13,815

BREAKDOWN OF CERTAIN COSTS FOR YEAR TO 31st DECEMBER 2023

Donations - non specific

SumUp	31
Just Giving	486
CD Fete	11
C Padmore	50 re sale of bike
Total	578

Admin Cost

Wix Domain	202
WC cards	45
Card reader	53
Mtg rooms	69
Nesting leaflets	35
Insurance	137
Camera batteries	11
Hi Vis vests	150
Total	702

Charitable Donations Made

House Martins Donation- Speaker's cause	50
Climate Conference - Contribution to cost	41
Total	91

Fund Raising Activities

B Clews	Walks etc	463
MC walk	Glow worms/Dawn Chorus	45
Projects/Ideas	Meeting raffle	75
Ponds Talk	Drinks sold	65
House Martins	Donations	102
OCE Event stand	Donations	64
Total		814

Cost of Fund Raising

House Martins	Coffee	90
CD Fete	Pitch cost	5
Ponds Talk	hall	60
Ponds Talk	wine/glasses	63
Projects/Ideas meeting room		214
Total		432

Potential Project Costs

Game Consultancy re Grey Partridge	744
Thames Landowners meeting	72
Total	816

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