Long Mead Foundation

Registered Charity Number: 1196294

Report for the year ended

31 March 2025

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Administrative Information

Trustees	**Fiona Ravenscroft** **Louise Henson** **Kevin Martin**
Registered address	**Horseshoe Island** **Oxford Road** **Swinford** **Witney OX29 4DU**
Bankers	**Metro Bank**
Key management personnel	**Catriona Bass**
Charity Registration number	**1196294**

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Long Mead Foundation

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Long Mead Foundation ('the Charity)
I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report
As the charity trustees of the organisation 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 the Charity's 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 the Charity 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 examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Adam Woolford FCA

Camerons Accountancy Consultants Limited
Chartered Accountants
9 Worton Park
Cassington
Witney
Oxfordshire
OX29 4SX

Date: .....18/12/2025.....

Long Mead Foundation
Year end 31 March 2025

Report of the Trustees – Year ending 31st March 2025

Long Mead Foundation was registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with The Charity Commission in England on 27th October 2021.

All Trustees have been in post throughout the period and have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by The Charity Commission in exercising their duties.

The objects of Long Mead Foundation are:

2. To promote, for the benefit of the public, the conservation protection and enhancement of the natural environment and in particular but not exclusively

a. To undertake the conservation and enhancement of the biodiversity of the floodplain meadows along the Upper Thames;
b. To advance the understanding of, and methods to, restore the ecosystems of floodplain meadows working with academic institutions, farmers and landowners;
c. To advance education of the public about the natural environment, including nature-based solutions for climate-change, particularly in relation to floodplain meadows;

2. To relieve the needs of adults with learning disabilities and autism by offering nature-based activities.

Introduction

This year, Long Mead Foundation (LMF) and the community network it initiated, Nature Recovery Network (NRN), (whose activities it facilitates) passed several significant milestones towards its goal of achieving sustainable, scaleable nature recovery efforts for rare floodplain meadows, of which only four square miles survive in the UK, as well as for associated floodplain habitats. We have shown, during the last five years, that our vision of connecting experts with enthusiasts where they all live (rather than parachuting the experts in) offers a genuinely inclusive and sustainable model for local landscape protection and recovery. It also enables local people with their collective long-term knowledge of the land (including expert knowledge) to drive both small-scale and landscape-scale restoration in their local area.

Restoration

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Since 2020, we have connected up around 500 acres of ancient and restored meadow along the River Thames around Eynsham and Pinkhill Locks by created meadows in the fields in between them. In March 2024, we acquired leases on another 100 acres of land along the River Thames around Eynsham and Swinford for direct community restoration. It is well known that ongoing management is the most critical element in the successful creation of these rare species-rich floodplain meadows. Now, along with Long Mead Local Wildlife Site we have direct management control over 150 acres of land in the connected meadow network that we are in the process of creating. This gives us the opportunity of showing what 'good' looks like – in a situation where 75% of attempts to create wildflower floodplain meadows fail, according to research from the Open University. (*Recovering lost hay meadows: An overview of floodplain-meadow projects in England and Wales* Rothero, Tatarenko, Gowing, 2020)

We have continued to create meadows for other landowners in our network (and to help with their ongoing management and restoration). In 2024, we added another 20 acres of meadow creation to the 100 acres of meadow that we have created around Pinkhill Lock since 2020, and we extended our Oxford meadow network by supporting the University Parks team to create a 1.5 acre meadow along the Cherwell River in the University Parks. The acquisition of a tractor with haymaking and meadow-creation equipment, funded by Natural England, has enabled us to create meadows on smaller sites. Most significantly, it means we can control more effectively the management of the restoration process without being reliant on the availability of contractors. The tractor is part of our 'tool library', enabling us to support other local organisations and individual landowners seeking to restore meadows or create new meadows.

Our weekly plant-propagation group continues to grow. We now have over 40 members, including those of us diagnosed with learning disabilities and autism, and those of us with physical or mental health challenges, as well as graduates seeking work experience, university students from Oxford Brookes and Oxford Universities, 6th formers, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme students, recent immigrants and retired people. Our long-term partners at Bridewell and FarmAbility continue to pay a vital role in our ability to propagate over 7000 plants this year, including several that are on the UK red list.

We can now say with some conviction, after 5 years of experience, that our pioneering therapeutic model of bringing diverse groups of people together to restore meadows has had multiple benefits – and more significant benefits than the conventional model of taking people with mental health challenges or with learning disabilities and autism into nature in their isolated groups. Feedback from participants suggests that 'the whole is much greater than the sum of the parts' and that everyone benefits from the diverse interactions. One of the unanticipated benefits is a strong social network that has evolved from working all together, which is now providing support for individuals back in the village and in their own homes. Our experience shows that collective efforts to build nature recovery networks also builds community networks. Diversity is a critical element of both.

One of our volunteers put it like this: *'The human values – including of respect, relationship, valuing difference and human diversity – which underpin the approach to volunteering at Long Mead – allows something quite unusual in quality and depth.'*

In our newly-leased Neyotts meadow by Eynsham Lock, the Nature Recovery Network planted out over 1000 of our hand-propagated plants in Autumn 2024. We also planted out on Long Mead Local Wildlife Site, in the University Parks and in Christ Church Meadows in Oxford, with the support of students from the Oxford University Nature Conservation Society. On 11th January, as part of Oxfordshire's Hedgerow Heroes Project, over 100 local people (aged from 5 to 85) turned up in the Neyotts meadow to plant one kilometre of hedge in one day, with our partners, the Oxford Conservation Volunteers. The Hedgerow Heroes Project is funded by the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England and facilitated by Wild Oxfordshire.

Outreach

Our outreach has also grown, with increasing numbers of talks, events and training for community organisations keen to learn about our inclusive bottom-up network model. We have been also sought out for advice by increasing numbers of larger organisations, landowners and local governments, including West Oxfordshire District Council, the Blenheim Estate, Savills and the Oxford Preservation Trust (see appendix).

We passed two more milestones in 2024 - 2025:

(1) In March 2025, we began sharing our experience of building a bottom-up network of local people for landscape-scale nature recovery with a formal training course. A grant from Sustainable Charlbury enabled us to run a six-month training course in *Inclusive Community Plant Propagation and Meadow Creation* for the Charlbury community and several other communities. Over the course of the 2025-2026 season, the participants have "learned by doing" during weekly sessions, including learning how to support our members with learning disabilities and autism, while propagating plants for their own meadows.

(2) In Summer 2024, we started conversations with the Oxford Preservation Trust (OPT) about adopting our bottom-up network model as a regional NGO. Having shown that it works to increase sustainability and scaling up at the grassroots level, we were interested to see whether it could work for increasing collaboration at the regional level. Our experience, during the last two decades, is that environmental NGOs tend not to be well-connected into local communities, with engagement often limited to the duration of a short-term grant. This has meant that local communities have been left to manage projects over the longer-term without the financial or human resources and, sometimes, without the expertise to do so.

The conventional model of NGO community engagement tends to involve inviting individuals to volunteer on the NGOs nature reserves, which may be miles away from the volunteer's home. Our vision is one of co-curation, giving communities a greater sense of 'ownership' of the restoration process of the land on their doorstep. So, instead of inviting individuals to work for the NGO anywhere in their landholding, the NGO seeks out the experts and

enthusiasts living in the communities bordering particular areas of land and collaborates with them as a community, taking advice from the local experts and giving the communities an experience of co-curation. OPT has taken up the challenge and plans have developed further through the 2025-2026 season

Research

Our research projects and publications are growing apace. Professor Kevan Martin and Catriona Bass contributed to a new study on Oxford University's Wytham Woods to be published by Oxford University Press in November 2025. Linda Losito, our beetle expert, with her husband Bob Cowley published a paper in the British Journal of Entomology and Natural History, on the diet of kestrels based on the pellets collected from below Long Mead's kestrel box, by the plant propagation group. (Losito L, Cowley B, *The importance of beetles in the diet of kestrel (Falco tinnuculus) and little owl (Athene Noctua)*. Brit. J. Ent. Nat. Hist. 38: 21 – 25, 2025). The Guardian Newspaper consulted us for an article on water quality, based on an article Kevan Martin wrote for our Nature Recovery Network website. We were also cited, at length, by author Tim Smedley in his book *The Last Drop.*

Our invertebrate research has been extended this year with the inclusion of three more surveyors, enabling us to study more species. This enhances our mission to create an indicator species-list of the ancient meadows and to compare it with meadows at various stages since starting restoration. Our goal is to understand the extent to which invertebrate diversity increases with botanical diversity and over what time-period. This year, we were able to study bees, butterflies and moths, flies, beetles, spiders and hoppers.

We have supported Oxford Brookes Masters students with their theses through the year. We have also had a full season of surveys, including water-quality monitoring, bird surveys, botanical surveys and water-vole surveys. We are very grateful to our local experts who not only do the surveys for us but also train local enthusiasts, some of whom are now able to train others.

Dr Marco Campera, Senior Lecturer in Conservation and Biodiversity at Oxford Brookes University writes of the Long Mead model: *"The network is growing, and systems are in place for long term monitoring of biodiversity and ecosystem services. This makes the project very exciting and has the potential for an impact at a local and national level."*

Building sustainability

Our long-term mission has always been both to show the value of a bottom-up network of local people for scaling up nature recovery efforts but also to provide salaries for core people including local experts, in order to enhance sustainability and scaleability. This year we have made the first steps towards achieving that.

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Until this year, we have all been providing our time and skills, largely *pro bono*. However, while hundreds of us are happy to volunteer to get our hands dirty in nature, the CEO was left almost alone to deal with the escalating backroom work (comms, co-ordination, admin and accounting).

In May 2024, we won a 3-year grant from the Oxfordshire Community Foundation's *Thriving in Nature Fund* to give us 20 hours paid work per week. This grant is paying for the wonderfully experienced Anna Parrinder, who lives in Eynsham, and who has taken on a good chunk of our administration, communications and co-ordination. It is also funding Kate Pritchard, who has 25 year's experience as a therapeutic gardener and as a curator of botanical collections. She also has very fine fundraising skills. This has meant that we have been able to get our accounts finished in good time – for the first time.

A core grant from the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment has also meant that we can fund some of the time of our entomologist surveyors, as well as those who are identifying species for us.

Further details of activities during the year can be found in the Appendix.

The Trustees are grateful for the hard work of Catriona Bass and Jodie Baker who continue to work largely *pro bono*. They are pleased that new funding in 2024/2025 that is paying for administrative support, has enabled the Financial Statement to be submitted on time.

They also thank all volunteers at Long Mead Foundation and the Nature Recovery Network and the contractors, consultants and experts who have contributed to the work of its Thames Valley Wildflower Meadow Restoration Project.

The Trustees offer their thanks for the financial support from the multiple individual donations made to the Foundation and to their sponsors: The Open University and West Oxfordshire District Council, Natural England, the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Community Foundation, the Trust of Oxfordshire's Environment, without whom much of this work would not be possible.

Approval of the Trustees

The Trustees of the Long Mead Foundation have approved these, the first financial statement for the period herein and is signed on their behalf by:

Signature redacted for security

M L Henson
Trustee

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Statement of Financial Activities 2024-2025

TOTAL OPENING BALANCE	**£29,399.33**	**BANK ACCOUNT End Mar 24**	**£39,371.33**
RESTRICTED O/B	£9,972.00	**BANK ACCOUNT End Mar 25**	**£52,939.51**
UNRESTRICTED O/B	£19,427.33		

RESTRICTED FUNDS	O/BAL	INCOME	RESTRICTED EXPENDITURE	RESTRICTED c/BALANCE
Oxfordshire Community Foundation		£19,870.67	£7,265.83	£12,604.84
Natural England		£50,000.00	£50,000.00	£0.00
Spacehive		£29,145.92	£26,810.50	£2,335.42
Open University	£9,983.00	£4,000.00	£6,468.00	£7,515.00
Sustainable Charlbury		£6,900.00	£1,221.96	£5,678.04
Oxfordshire County Council	-£11.00	£2,500.00	£2,490.00	-£1.00
Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE)			£32.49	-£32.49
West Oxfordshire District Council	£0.00	£2,190.00	£2,211.00	-£21.00
TOTAL	**£9,972.00**	**£114,606.59**	£96,499.78	£28,078.81

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	O/BAL	INCOME	UNRESTRICTED EXPENDITURE	UNRESTRICTED C/BALANCE
Donation		£2,592.63		
Gift Aid				
Other Income		£1,299.83		
Plant Sales		£2,368.00		
			£6,805.59	
Transfer of overheads to core			£5,991.57	
TOTAL UNRESTRICTED INCOME	**£19,427.33**	**£6,260.46**	**£814.02**	**£24,873.77**
TOTALS (Restricted and Unrestricted)	**£29,399.33**	**£120,867.05**	**£97,313.80**	**£52,952.58**

EXPENSES	
EXPENDITURE FROM RESTRICTED FUNDS	
OFFICE/ADMIN	£533.58
COMMS/ENGAGEMENT	£1,275.98
PERSONNEL	£5,002.18
OVERHEADS	£5,991.57
PLANT PROP	£2,223.67
RESEARCH	£3,496.46
RESTORATION	£77,976.34
TOTAL	**£96,499.78**

EXPENDITURE FROM UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	
OUTREACH/COMMS	£553.83
OFFICE/ADMIN	£2,135.25
VOLUNTEER EXPENSES	£230.51
REFERENCE	£26.00
SITE COSTS/REPAIRS	£113.55
TRAINING	£3,675.00
PLANT PROPAGATION	£18.06
OTHER	£53.39
UNRESTRICTED - TOTAL	**£6,805.59**

TOTAL EXPENSES	**£103,305.37**
OVERHEADS From grant income	**£5,991.57**
TOTAL EXPENSES inc overheads from grant income	**£97,313.80**
TOTAL C/B	**£52,952.58**

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Appendix: Details of Activities during 2024-2025

Meadow Creation/Restoration Advice to:

- Hanborough Parish Council (25.06.24)
- Blenheim Estates (09.07.24, 02.09.24)
- Charlbury Town Council (06.09.24)
- Oxford Preservation Trust (12.092.4, 01.11.24)
- Oxford University Parks
- Dragon School (19.09.24)
- Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy – Manager
- West Oxfordshire District Council
- Savills Land Agents (10.09.24)

Talks and Conference Presentations

- Wolfson Sustainability Workshop (20.04.24)
- Leverhulme Centre, Oxford University (15.05.24)
- Oxford Botanical Gardens, Nature Blitz (14.07.24)
- Oxford Botanical Gardens, *Botanical University Challenge*
- Eynsham Society, 17.07. 24
- Woodstock Natural History Society 08.09.24
- North East Cotswold Farmer Cluster Conference - Keynote Speech 16.09.24
- Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre - Autumn Conference 19.10.24
- Oxford University Ecology Masters Students, Environmental Change Institute 28.10.24
- Hailey Community 28.10.24
- Eynsham Society 20.11.24
- Harwell Community 04.12.24
- Charlbury Town Council - Year of Nature Recovery 12.01.25

Academic/eNGO Meetings/Presentations

- Manchester University 09.09.24
- BBOWT - Landscape Recovery Grant 09.12.24
- Open University Practitioner Workshops LMF - Host 25.10.24
- Entomologists' Seminar 14.11.24
- Environmental Change Institute - Leverhulme Centre, Oxford University Drs Laurance Canning and Wendee Zhang - Health and Well-being in Nature 07.12.24
- Voices of small VCSE – Focus Group 10.02.25

- Laurie Wright - Youth Group 15.02.25
- Oxfordshire County Council Local Nature Recovery Strategy. In-person workshop to explore next steps in the development of a landscape-scale nature recovery partnership project across the Oxfordshire Upper Thames. 01.04.25
- Annual Parish Meeting 03.03.25

Community Workshops/Surveys

- Watervole survey 18.05.24 – led by Ecologist Anna Rowlands
- Freshwater invertebrate survey 08.06.24 led by Dr Maarten van Hardenbroek
- Botanical survey 23.06.24 – led by Botanist Debbie Lewis
- Botanical survey 07.07.24 – led by Barbara Spence
- Bartholomew School, Year 12 Work Experience, 12.07.07
- Botanical survey 26.07.24 – led Camilla Lambrick
- Botanical survey 11.08.24 - led by Camilla Lambrick
- Tractor training 13.08.24
- Potting on and Planting Out 22.09.24
- Beavers Planting in Churchyard 23.09.24
- Bird ID Walk 11.01.25
- Peace Oak Apple Day 12.10.25
- Charlbury/OPT/Harwell Village - Plant Propagation Workshop 15.10.25
- NRN Meadow Day – Planting Out 20.10.24
- University Parks - Community Planting 13.11.24
- Hedge-planting 12.01.25
- Bird Surveyors Workshop 16.03.25
- Bird Surveys monthly throughout the year

Fundraising Concert – Wolfson College – David Earl
02.06.24

Partner Meetings

- Environment Agency, Senior Ecologist Graham Scholey 24.05.24
- Professor Yadvinder Malhi, Leverhulme Institute, Oxford University 07.06.24
- Conservation Target Area Leads, 11.6.24
- West Oxfordshire District Council Nature Recovery Officers
- FarmAbility
- OPT Green Spaces Committee
- Go For It! 14.02.25
- Bridewell 28.02.25
- Oxford Conservation Volunteers

Partnerships

Key partners include:

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- FarmAbility
  Ongoing long-term partnership with FarmAbility which dates back to its founding over 10 years ago. Monthly visits of a group of adults with learning disabilities and autism.
- Bridewell Organic Gardens (Mental Health Charity)
  Ongoing long-term partnership which dates back over 10 years ago. LMF supports Bridewell to propagate floodplain meadow species on their own site for planting out in the meadows that we are restoring in the landscape.
- Eynsham Partnership Academy
  Sixth form end of year work experience. Students undertaking Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme
- Eynsham Beaver Scouts
- Pinkhill Scouts
- Peace Oak Community Orchard

Other partners include:

- Oxford Conservation Volunteers joined our community restoration activities.
- West Oxfordshire District Council
- Environmental Change Institute Master's students
- Wild Oxfordshire - Oxfordshire Hedgerow Heroes Project
- Campaign for the Protection of Rural England - Oxfordshire Hedgerow Heroes Project
- Oxfordshire County Council - Local Nature Partnership - Nature and Health subgroup
- Open University - Floodplain Meadows Partnership
- Oxford Brookes University - Conservation Ecology Course
- Oxford Botanical gardens
- Local Wildlife Trust - BBOWT