

MERSEY RIVERS TRUST

England & Wales · Charity number 1196777

Details

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2021-11-25

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address Riverview
The Embankment Business Park
Heaton Mersey
Stockport
SK4 3GN

Phone 07503178433

Email info@merseyrivers.org

Website www.merseyrivers.org

Activities

Objects: TO PROMOTE, ENCOURAGE AND WHERE APPLICABLE DELIVER PROJECTS FOR THE PRESERVATION, RESTORATION, AND DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN AND RURAL WATERWAYS AND THEIR ENVIRONS, INCLUDING ADJACENT ESTUARINE AND COASTAL AREAS AS DEFINED IN THE AREA OF BENEFIT, FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT AND ITS WILDLIFE. TO ADVANCE EDUCATION BY RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE ISSUES RELATING TO SECURING, IMPROVING AND MAINTAINING SUCH URBAN AND RURAL WATERWAYS AND THEIR ENVIRONS. TO PROMOTE AND WHERE APPLICABLE DELIVER PROJECTS FOR THE USE OF AND ACCESS AND TO SUCH URBAN AND RURAL WATERWAYS AND WATERSIDES IN THE INTERESTS OF SOCIAL WELFARE FOR RECREATION AND OTHER LEISURE-TIME OCCUPATION WITH THE OBJECT OF IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE FOR THE PUBLIC.

Activities: The Mersey Rivers Trust is a charity working in partnership with all those interested in improving our local rivers and waterways. As a member of the national Rivers Trust movement, it is the Rivers Trust for the River Mersey and its catchment. The Trust covers a large area of the North West River Basin District and includes the rivers Alt, Crossens, Irwell, Tame, Goyt, Bollin, Weaver and more.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Environment/conservation/heritage
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Throughout England

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£1,177,767	£1,142,658	£550,778	24
2024-03-31	£974,798	£843,371	£515,669	15
2023-03-31	£683,053	£655,243	£384,242	14
2022-06-20	£936,662	£1,130,897	£356,432	13

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Dr Keith Hendry	Chair	2021-11-25
Alexander Jeremy Lawrence Clegg		2022-03-09
CHRISTOPHER FINDLEY		2021-11-21
David Michael Thompson		2021-11-21
Dr Janet Hooke		2025-03-01
Dr Stephen Boulton		2021-11-21
Francesca Sullivan		2022-03-09
Nicolas Carter		2021-11-21
ROWENA BIRCH		2024-06-12
Sarah Jenner		2021-11-21

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England & Wales - Charity number 1196777

Accounts

Charity Number: 1196777

Mersey Rivers Trust

Report and financial statements
For the year ended 31 March 2025

Mersey Rivers Trust
Reference and administrative information
for the year ended 31 March 2025

Charity number

Registered office and operational address Riverview A17 Embankment Business Park Heaton
Mersey Stockport SK3 3GN

Trustees

Trustees who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows:

Dr Keith Hendry	Chair	
Mr Christopher Findley	Trustee	
Mr Nicolas Carter	Trustee	
Mrs Sarah Jenner	Trustee	
Mr David Thompson	Trustee	
Dr Stephen Boulton	Trustee	
Mr Alex Clegg	Trustee	
Ms Francesca Sullivan	Trustee	
Mrs Rowena Birch	Trustee	Appointed 12 June 2024
Dr Janet Hooke	Trustee	Appointed 1 March 2025

Trustees who held title to property belonging to the charity during the reporting period or at the date of approval were: None

Key management	Name	Paul Henbrey	Operations and Delivery Director
personnel	Name	John Sanders	Strategic Planning and Development Director
	Name	Clare Bullen	Assistant Director

Bankers	Name	Triodos
	Address	Deanery Road, Bristol, BS1 5AS

Solicitors	Name	Slater Heelis
	Address	86 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 2ER DX 14310 Manchester 1

Auditors/IE	Name	Slade & Cooper Limited
		Beehive Mill, Jersey St, Manchester, M4 6JG

Mersey Rivers Trust
Trustees' annual report
for the year ended 31 March 2025

The trustees present their report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Reference and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the charity's constitution and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: SORP applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102.

Objectives and activities

The charity was created in 1998 to work in the River Mersey catchment in Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Cheshire, Lancashire and Derbyshire and has the following objectives:

- To promote, encourage and where applicable deliver projects for the preservation, restoration, and development of urban and rural waterways and their environs, including adjacent estuarine and coastal areas as defined in the area of benefit, for the benefit of the public environment and its wildlife.
- To advance education by raising public awareness of the issues relating to securing, improving, and maintaining such urban and rural waterways and their environs.
- To promote and where applicable deliver projects for the use of and access to such urban and rural waterways and watersides in the interests of social welfare for recreation and other leisure-time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the public.

The trustees have reviewed the objectives of the Trust and agreed they are still valid.

Since September 2014, the charity has been a Rivers Trust, part of a national network of Rivers Trusts. The charity pays an annual fee and gains the support of the regional and national directors in carrying out Trust activities including employment of staff. Staff are entitled to a Rivers Trust pension scheme.

In June 2017 the Healthy Waterways Trust (operating under the name of the Healthy Rivers Trust) merged with the Mersey Basin Rivers Trust with a consequential change of name to the Mersey Rivers Trust. The charity continued to operate as a member of the Rivers Trust and benefits from a wider volunteer base and the utilisation of the skills and experience of its staff and Trustees. The Trust converted to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 20 June 2022.

As in recent years the charity has focused on research into water quality and identification and implementation of improvement and engagement projects. It has also been a valuable forum for discussion between local authorities, water professionals and the academic establishments. The charity has engaged with local communities as well as professional networks.

The Trustees have identified a number of key long term strategies to help deliver the aims and objectives of the Trust. The Fisheries Strategy aimed at returning native fish species to our rivers has been developed and was implemented in 2023 and continues to gather information on fish stocks to establish a baseline for future improvements. A second strategy, Access and Recreation aimed at improving access to rivers and waterbodies for the purpose of recreational activities such as swimming, water sports, walking, cycling and fishing was developed in 2024. Action plans identifying short and long term action to deliver these strategies have also been developed. A third strategy to set the ambition around the water quality improvement needed in rivers and water bodies in the Mersey Catchment is in development, and a fourth strategy will follow in 2025 regarding nature's recovery and biodiversity related to the Trust's activities and ambitions.

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The charity is committed to working with local groups and volunteers to report and tackle the major pollution issues affecting our rivers such as sewage overflows, industrial pollution, and fly tipping. In addition, we work with Local Authorities, Politicians, Water Companies and other private companies to highlight issues, develop and implement improvements and identify funding. Several working groups have been established with the inclusion of local Action and Friends groups, such as the Tame Working Group, BEACON (River Bollin action group) and several other "Friends" groups (volunteers who have particular interest in a river or area).

The involvement of local volunteers continues to be a key focus area. The charity has engaged with 155 volunteers (in excess of 900 volunteer hours) in the reporting period to help deliver Citizen Science monitoring, invasive species control, riverside litter picks and river restoration projects. The cash equivalent value of our volunteers input, based on the minimum wage, is £11,000.

The Trust aims to target projects and funding to address specific issues within the catchment with a targeted approach based on three key rivers: River Bollin, River Tame and the River Alt. Each river presents different challenges ranging from urban diffuse pollution in the River Tame and agricultural and invasive species control in the River Bollin and flood risk reduction in the River Alt utilising Natural Flood Management (NFM) techniques. In the account period approximately 40% of staff have been engaged in delivering NFM projects and 25% of staff have been actively working on farmer engagement projects to offer advice and support to farms on actions to improve river water quality.

The Trust does not make use of social investment opportunities and does not make grants or other funding to third parties.

The trustees review the aims, objectives and activities of the charity each year. This report looks at what the charity has achieved and the outcomes of its work in the reporting period. The trustees report the success of each key activity and the benefits the charity has brought to those groups of people that it is set up to help. The review also helps the trustees ensure the charity's aims, objectives and activities remained focused on its stated purposes.

The trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning its future activities. In particular, the trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives that have been set.

Achievements and performance

The charity's main activities and who it tries to help are described below. All its charitable activities focus on the rivers, waterbodies and their environs in the Mersey Catchment and are undertaken to further the charity's charitable purposes for the public benefit and in line with FRS102. The Trust has continued to develop and grow to meet the extensive water quality, river habitat and flood risk issues in the Mersey Catchment and has a significant portfolio of approved and funded projects.

As part of a leadership succession plan, a new Assistant Director role was created and appointed in 2024. Working alongside the Directors, this new role creates capacity to support the delivery of the organisation's strategies as well as prepare for future changes as senior managers reach retirement.

Permanent staff numbers have remained constant; however temporary staff have been employed to deliver peak workloads. The Trust was again awarded the hosting of three "Catchment Based Approach" (CaBA) catchment partnerships funded by DEFRA via the Environment Agency (£15k per partnership). The team contributed to developing Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) for Liverpool City Region,

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Greater Manchester and Cheshire, as well as Integrated Water Management Plans for Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region. In Cheshire, the Bentley Environmental Foundation-sponsored project focused on river restoration along part of Valley Brook, completing habitat surveys, designing project interventions, and securing landowner agreements. Two trainee roles were supported by this funding: one as a farm advisor and the other as a monitoring officer. We were able to offer a temporary project manager position to one of the trainees at the end of the project, whilst the other secured another role elsewhere in the sector. Additional outreach involved engagement with local farms about sustainable farming through a series of new events including farmer wellbeing training, a webinar for the equine community and digital inclusion training, as well as offering one to one farm visits and "pie and pint" nights to raise awareness of sustainable farming practices. The Trust managed significant work on Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) through the Cheshire Local Action Group (LAG) Fund (Defra funding). INNS surveys were conducted, and management data were transferred to GIS for future planning. The charity continued its work with stakeholders through BEACON (Bollin Environmental Action and Conservation), organising catchment planning meetings, volunteer work parties, and social events to maintain strong relationships with members.

In 2024 we launched our Mersey Impact Accelerator, looking to harness the large student and academic population across the Mersey Basin (Manchester and Liverpool Universities) when it comes to collecting data, interpreting data and developing innovative nature-based solutions to water quality challenges. This included hosting all first-year Environmental students studying at the University of Manchester on a field work practical session to the River Bollin, where a water quality "blitz" was undertaken to collect sample data for a large stretch of the river. This exercise will be repeated twice annually to build up a dataset of the water quality over time.

As one of the priority areas of the Upper Mersey Catchment Partnership, the South Manchester Urban Brooks group identified several projects to improve the water environment in urban areas. The team undertook a feasibility study on Micker Brook for river restoration measures to ease fish passage through the Bramhall area of Stockport. MRT has joined a working group regarding the Poise Brook Flood Risk Strategy, as the only non-statutory stakeholder, demonstrating the value we can bring as hosts of the Catchment Partnership.

Through the National Catchment monitoring cooperative project, new equipment and training for citizen scientists continued and a volunteer celebration event was held to share data and results with the volunteers. A water blitz was held in Poynton to gather water quality information with stakeholders, and this will be repeated for comparison in future years. The team's expertise in electro fishing to monitor the presence or absence of fish was utilised across the Mersey Basin, which provides an indication of the level of water quality in the river at that time. One of the successes of our work to improve the habitat of the River Tame led to the Environment Agency fisheries team restocking a stretch of river that can now support good fish populations.

Funded through the Earnest Cook Trust, our Blue Mentor programme engaged with underrepresented groups of young people in Greater Manchester, resulting in the development of group projects helping to connect people with the water environment. Alongside an MRT stall, the Blue Mentor stall was popular at the Greater Manchester Mayor's Green Summit held in Salford and new connections were made for groups to take part as the programme continues to 2027.

The Alt Catchment saw a successful bid for a £2.1 million Natural Flood Management (NFM) programme, designed to implement measures such as leaky dams, wetlands, and sand dune management across the River Alt catchment during 2024 to 2026. Led by MRT and funded by the Environment Agency's £25m national NFM Programme, it brings together partners from the Alt

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Crossens Catchment Partnership to deliver a range of NFM measures from the source at Huyton to the sea at Hightown. The total area of NFM measures for the project is over 48 hectares.

Phase 1 of the project was delivered in 2024 which involved designing and developing projects across 19 sites. We delivered woodland management works at 3 sites, and 25 leaky dams at 3 sites. We held 5 community engagement events in Liverpool, Knowsley and Sefton, engaging with over 500 local residents, and consulting on our project plans. 40 volunteers have helped us with wildlife surveys and building leaky dams. To monitor the impact of the NFM measures, we installed 29 monitoring stations throughout the Alt catchment to measure the river level and capture fixed-point photography. MRT staff have also undertaken water quality sampling, invertebrate kick sampling, River MoRPh surveys, and spot flow measurements at each site to gather a detailed picture of condition.

In addition to the NFM programme, we were funded by the Environment Agency to undertake a feasibility study of the NFM opportunities to reduce/prevent recurrent flooding issues in Maghull. These are now in the detailed design phase.

We delivered a farmland Species Recovery Project working with MEAS (Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service) to map populations and improve habitats for Water voles, Brown hares and farmland birds. This also involved giving advice to farmers on suitable land management practices. As part of the project, we have trialled eDNA sampling methods and now using the technique to survey for the presence or absence of fish, eels, otter and mink across the Catchment.

Through the Defra funded Lowland Peat Project we worked on farms to measure peat depth and groundwater levels in order to map the gradient of remaining peat soils across the landscape of the River Alt in Lancashire. Discussions were held with farmers to promote wetter farming methods if water tables can be raised through interventions in future rounds of funding.

We carried out a feasibility project in the priority catchment of Whittle Brook in Warrington. This examined water quality improvement opportunities across the entire catchment and allowed us to build a new relationship with Warrington Borough Council. 3 project concepts were taken forward for detailed design and one is being delivered during the 25/26 financial year, with the other two being planned for in the following years.

We continued to work on Championing Coastal Coordination by bringing together and connecting local community groups.

The Trust develops an annual funding plan which is aligned to its strategies which support its key objectives. The plan targets specific funding streams and wide areas where potential funding may be obtained. The trust either manages the delivery of activities to deliver agreed outputs and uses its own staff to directly deliver projects. The funding plan will ensure sufficient funding to maintain staff levels and cover overheads.

Generally, the funding aimed at the aquatic environmental sector has remained steady however there has been an increase in the opportunities to deliver projects aimed at reducing the risk of local flooding using natural flood management techniques which also has some benefit on the river and other waterbody quality.

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Beneficiaries of our services

The Trust aims to improve the aquatic environment of the River Mersey catchment in the Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Merseyside, Lancashire and Derbyshire areas for the benefit of local communities, anglers and other river users, environmental action groups and other organisations with similar objectives. Improvements to the environment will benefit the public through cleaner and healthier rivers with improved access, education and awareness through public events and volunteer activities.

The Trust employs (funded by the Ernest Cook Foundation) a "Blue Influencer" to work with children and youth groups from disadvantaged groups and/or deprived communities to raise awareness and increase education around the issues on our rivers. Engagement with local Youth Zones is progressing well in several areas, including Manchester and Warrington. We continue to work with several schools and colleges to raise awareness of river management issues and develop environmental skills.

The Trust has delivered wide ranging outputs which support our strategies benefitting rivers, increased biodiversity, wildlife and local communities.

In 2024/25 the key outputs delivered were: -

- Volunteers engaged – 156
- Volunteer days – 175
- River clean ups – 21
- Farms worked on (delivering advice and farm management plans – 88
- Farmers engaged – 123
- Natural Flood Management interventions delivered – 25
- Schools worked with – 9
- Pupils engaged – 298
- Km of river improved - 5.2
- No of Trees planted - 220

All of the above outputs were aligned to strategic objectives or were targeted at priority areas or waterbodies in the Mersey Catchment

Financial review

The Trust continues to be run on a sound and improving financial basis and has been successful in gaining funding for major projects across the catchment. Good financial management has maintained a positive cash flow hence reducing risk and ensuring creditors are paid within payment terms.

The total income received in the reporting period was £1,177,767 (£974,798:2024) and expenditure of £1,142,658 (£843,371:2024). The net income/expenditure of £35,109 resulted from income received for in year projects which will be completed in the following financial year and project efficiencies on unrestricted contract work.

The increase in income and expenditure compared with the last reporting period is largely due to the successes in winning funding bids for large projects. This included a major Natural Flood Management project delivered in partnership with three local authorities in the Merseyside area with the Trust as the lead partner.

The key expenditure areas associated with charitable activities such as catchment partnership hosting and project delivery are staff costs (salaries, National Insurance and Pension contributions) of £635,917. Staff costs increased by 40% because of pay increases to reflect the higher cost of living,

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additional staff joining the pension scheme, temporary staff employed to deliver peak workload and the appointment of an Assistant Director.

The Trust is almost wholly funded by grants and awards to complete environmental projects and initiatives. The principal source of funding is the Environment Agency through its Water and Environment Improvement Fund, Natural Flood Management Fund and Catchment Based Approach. However, the Trust identified this as a medium risk due to a potential reduction in future Government spending and has actively tried to find alternative funding sources to reduce the reliance on Environment Agency funding. The funding is used to deliver projects using Mersey Rivers Trust staff (staff costs recovery) and the use of contractors and consultants (project management). A small number of directly contracted works were carried out on behalf of our partners.

The Trust's unrestricted funds have decreased to £343,003 (£416,445: 2024) reflecting the delivery of projects funded by the Trust and additional staff costs not directly funded from other projects.

Restricted funds increased to £1,083,359 (£99,415: 2024) as a result of increased funding of new projects.

Reserves policy

Reserves are that part of the Trust's funds which are freely available for its general purpose after it has met its commitments and covered its other planned expenditure. These unrestricted funds are needed to bridge the gap between the spending and receiving of income and to cover administrative, project development and support costs without which the Trust could not function. The trustees consider that due to the expansion and future growth plans for the Trust the ideal level of reserves as of 31st March 2025 would be in the region of £335,000 being 6 months (or 50%) of future annual base operating costs (2025/26) for salaries, insurance, accounting, governance and general administration costs.

The unrestricted "General Fund" of £343,003 includes MRT planned funding (£114,500) to deliver MRT identified projects. The balance of the General Fund of £228,503 will be regarded as 'MRT Reserves'. Reserves have decreased by £15,440 from 2023/24.

The reserves stand at 34% of base annual operating costs, lower than the stated reserve policy figure of 50%. The decrease in the percentage of reserves is mainly due to increased staff costs (additional staff to meet the expected increase in project delivery and strategic development). This will be offset in 2025/26 by project efficiencies, unrestricted funds and donations

Plans for the future

We will continue to deliver our short-term plans which are aligned to our long-term objectives of restoration of the River Mersey environment and improved public access for health and recreation (by 2050 given the scale of the challenges faced in the Mersey Basin).

The 2050 outcomes will guide the shorter-term strategy for the growth and development of the Trust over the next three years. Allied to the longer-term outcomes, we have developed the following key priorities for the period 2024 to 2027:

- Given constrained resources in comparison to the size of the Mersey Basin, the Trustees continue to endorse a strategy (set in 2024) to focus the activities of the Trust in priority river catchments and aligned to four key enhancement strategies (fisheries improvement; increase river access and recreation; water quality enhancement; nature recovery and river conservation improvements).

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- In line with this strategic intent, we will continue to build robust survey evidence and deliver appropriate measures for river habitat and water quality enhancement in our priority catchments covering:
 - River Irk catchment
 - River Bollin catchment
 - River Tame catchment
 - River Alt catchment
- Additionally, in delivering on our four enhancement strategies we will continue to grow our activities in the Upper Mersey (primarily in south Manchester and Stockport), Weaver/Gowy (Cheshire) and the wider Alt/Crossens (principally parts of Liverpool City Region) catchments which have had a lesser focus historically:
 - Continue to work with EA and Natural England on the Alt/Crossens engagement activities with local farming communities
 - Farm advice and support of interventions to reduce agricultural impact on receiving watercourses in the Weaver catchment.
 - Work with Environment Agency and local authorities to improve river health and enhance river access in south Manchester and Stockport
 - Build relationships with local Authorities to develop partnership bids to fund measures to address flooding issues utilising Natural Flood Management techniques.
- The basin-wide footprint of the Trust is a key benefit so we can take a holistic approach. We will therefore seek to maintain the balance between activities in the upper Mersey basin (i.e. Greater Manchester) and the lower Mersey basin (i.e. Cheshire and Merseyside).
- Deliver natural flood management solutions in our priority catchments targeted in dialogue with flood risk authorities to those communities that will benefit most from these solutions.
- Expand our education and engagement with local communities in our target catchments, increasing our River Guardian volunteers, volunteer inputs and encouraging local ownership ("Friends" groups).
- Continue to deliver the Trust's fisheries strategy focused on our target catchments, including agreed priority actions, such as targeted monitoring, addressing migration barriers, physical habitat improvements and improving our engagement with the angling community.
- Continue to work with relevant parties to deliver measures aligned to our access and recreation strategy for the river systems in the Mersey catchment, including promotion of riverside access and recreation along the main River Mersey in Greater Manchester and Merseyside
- Improve access and aesthetic quality of the water environment in our priority catchments to encourage more people to gain benefits from their local waterways. This will particularly involve working with our volunteers and "Friends Groups" (including BEACON) with litter clean-ups and carrying out small-scale works to improve access to waterways and enhance biodiversity and river habitat.
- Enhance and expand our relationships with key delivery partners - principally other Third Sector organisations – to support future funding bids.
- Continue our engagement with the two city regions of the Mersey Basin on the development and implementation of Integrated Water Management Plans for Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region.
- Continue to strengthen our links to academic institutions in the Mersey Basin to identify opportunities for collaboration and encourage research into innovative solutions to the challenges we face in the catchment.
- Development of two additional key Strategies: River Water Quality and Nature Recovery and Conservation.

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Structure, governance and management

Healthy Waterways Trust was constituted by Trust Deed dated 6 October 1998 and deed of variation dated 1st July 1999 and was a registered charity No. 01073152. The Trust was renamed The Mersey Rivers Trust in May 2017.

The Trust applied to the Charity Commission to convert to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The main driver for this action was to reduce the administrative burden of reporting to both the Charity Commission and Companies House (as a Limited Company). The Mersey Rivers Trust Limited Company has been closed and "struck off" the Companies House register. The application to become a CIO was accepted and registered on 25 November 2021. The Trust worked with the Charity Commission to transfer the assets and business of the original Trust to the new CIO which was completed on 20 June 2022.

The charity is constituted under a constitution dated 24 November 2021. The Trust constituted itself as a "Foundation CIO" whose only voting members are its charity trustees.

The trustees are members of the charity, but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in note 8 to the accounts.

The Trustees delegate the day-to-day operation of the charity including its bank accounts to its two Executive Directors, Mr Paul Henbrey and Mr John Sanders. Governance and strategic direction to meet the objectives of the charity are led by the Trustees.

Appointment of Trustees

The first and current trustees were appointed (and may be removed) by its board of trustees. There should be one third of the trustees or two trustees, whichever is the greater, of those attending a meeting to be quorate.

The charitable objectives of the Trust are such that the trustees believe that it is essential to ensure that the management of the charity is effective and in line with good practice in the charitable sector. In addition, the areas of activity require experience, knowledge and expertise in river basin management, water resources, environmental management and protection, local government and the voluntary sector. The trustees annually review the membership of the trust to ensure an appropriate balance of management, and more specialist expertise is available. New trustees are appointed following consideration by the existing trustees collectively. Trustees may serve for a maximum period of three years before standing down or seeking re-election. Each new Trustee undertakes an induction process based on Charity Commission guidance (CC3). Regular updates and events e.g. Charity Commission news, regulatory changes or potential issues are notified to the Trustees by the Directors.

Related parties and relationships with other organisations

No trustee receives remuneration or other benefit for their work with the charity. Any contractual relationship with a related party must be disclosed: in the current or previous year, no such related party transactions were reported.

The charity does not have any subsidiaries. The Charity is a member of the national Rivers Trust movement, an umbrella organisation for local Rivers Trust in England, Wales and Ireland. The Rivers

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Trust campaigns on national issues and provides advice, guidance and support to local Trusts, as well as offering a Pension Scheme for member trust employees.

Remuneration policy for key management personnel

Remuneration for key staff (Operations and Delivery Director and the Strategic Planning and Development Director) is aligned to the national Rivers Trust guidance "Pay Guide for Rivers Trusts October 2023".

The post of Director is designated as Grade 6 – "Director of a medium/large sized Trust". The appointment of Paul Henbrey was made in November 2016 and John Sanders in July 2019.

In August 2024 an Assistant Director, Clare Bullen was appointed with a designated salary also aligned to Grade 6 of the Pay Guide for Rivers Trusts October 2023

Remuneration will be reviewed annually by the Trustees.

Risk management

The monitoring and management of risk is a dynamic process, and the charity faces some level of risk in the activities, events and contracts that it engages in. The trustees have a risk management strategy which comprises:

- an annual review of the principal risks and uncertainties that the charity may face;
- the establishment of policies, systems and procedures to mitigate those risks identified in the annual review; and
- the implementation of procedures, designed to minimise or manage any potential impact the charity should those risks materialise.
 - Governance risks - eg inappropriate organisational structure, difficulties recruiting trustees with relevant skills, conflict of interest;
 - Financial risks - eg accuracy and timeliness of financial information, adequacy of reserves and cash flow, diversity of income sources;
 - External risks - eg public perception and adverse publicity, demographic changes, government policy.

Compliance with law and regulation - eg breach of trust law and regulatory requirements of particular activities such as fund-raising.

The charity's review of its risk management will continue to help to ensure:

- the charity's aims are achieved more effectively.
- significant risks are known and monitored enabling trustees to make a more effective contribution.
- there is improved forward planning.

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Fundraising

The Trust does not carry out direct fundraising activities. Small unsolicited donations from the public are occasionally received.

Funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others

The Trust does not hold funds or other assets on behalf of other individuals or organisations.

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Statement of responsibilities of the trustees

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 charity's financial activities during the period and of its financial position at the end of the period. In preparing financial statements giving a true and fair view, the trustees should follow best practice and:

- 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 UK Accounting Standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation

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. 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.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The trustees' annual report has been approved by the trustees on 01/12/2025 and signed on their behalf by:



Title Chair

Independent examiner's report
to the members of
Mersey Rivers Trust

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Mersey Rivers Trust (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2025, and of its incoming resources and application of resources, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the trustees' annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the

Independent Auditors' Report (continued)

extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the trustees' report; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 12, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of financial statements which give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with regulations made under section 154 of that Act.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect

Independent Auditors' Report (continued)

of irregularities, including fraud. The specific procedures for this engagement and the extent to which these are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

- enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims.
- enquiry of the charity's staff, management and those charged with governance to identify any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.
- reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- auditing the risk of management override of controls, including through testing journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, and evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Slade & Cooper

Slade & Cooper Limited
Statutory Auditors
Beehive
Jersey Street
Manchester
M4 6JG

Date: 23/12/2025

Slade & Cooper Limited is eligible to act as an auditor in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

Mersey Rivers Trust
Statement of Financial Activities
(including Income and Expenditure account)
for the year ended 31 March 2025

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds 2025 £	Total funds 2024 £
Income from:					
Charitable activities	3	84,615	1,083,359	1,167,974	967,367
Investments	4	9,793	-	9,793	7,431
Total income		94,408	1,083,359	1,177,767	974,798
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities:	5	167,659	974,999	1,142,658	843,371
Total expenditure		167,659	974,999	1,142,658	843,371
Net income/(expenditure) for the year	6	(73,251)	108,360	35,109	131,427
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		416,254	99,415	515,669	384,242
Total funds carried forward		343,003	207,775	550,778	515,669

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Balance sheet as at 31 March 2025

	Note	2025		2024	
		£	£	£	£
Current assets					
Debtors	10	141,792		168,306	
Cash at bank and in hand		1,022,796		480,744	
Total current assets		1,164,588		649,050	
Liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due in less than one year	11	(613,810)		(133,381)	
Net current assets			550,778		515,669
Net assets			550,778		515,669
The funds of the charity:					
Restricted income funds	12		207,775		99,415
Unrestricted income funds	13		343,003		416,254
Total charity funds			550,778		515,669

The notes on pages 19 to 29 form part of these accounts.

Approved by the trustees on 01/12/2025 and signed on their behalf by:



Dr Keith Hendry (Chair)

Mersey Rivers Trust
Statement of Cash Flows
for the year ending 31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	15	532,259	(141,612)
<i>Cash flows from investing activities:</i>			
Dividends, interest, and rents from investments		9,793	7,431
Cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		9,793	7,431
Increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the year		542,052	(134,181)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		480,744	614,925
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		1,022,796	480,744

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025

1 Accounting policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgments and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

a Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), second edition - October 2019 (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared to give a 'true and fair view' and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), second edition - October 2019, rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

Mersey Rivers Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note.

The comparative figures for the prior year ended 31 March 2024 were unaudited.

b Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

The trustees have made no key judgments which have a significant effect on the accounts.

The trustees do not consider that there are any sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amount of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

c Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

For legacies, entitlement is taken as the earlier of the date on which either: the charity is aware that probate has been granted, the estate has been finalised and notification has been made by the executor(s) to the charity that a distribution will be made, or when a distribution is received from the estate. Receipt of a legacy, in whole or in part, is only considered probable when the amount can be measured reliably and the charity has been notified of the executor's intention to make a distribution. Where legacies have been notified to the charity, or the charity is aware of the granting of probate, and the criteria for income recognition have not been met, then the legacy is treated as a contingent asset and disclosed if material.

Income received in advance of a provision of a specified service is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

d Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the Bank.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

e Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of charity.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose.

Restricted funds are donations and partnership agreements which the funder has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity.

f Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Expenditure on charitable activities includes salary payments, payments to contractors and other administration costs undertaken to further the purposes of
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

h Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

i Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

j Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

k Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

l Pensions

Employees of the charity are entitled to join a defined contribution scheme. The charity's contribution is restricted to the contributions disclosed in note 7. There were no outstanding contributions at the year end.

2 Legal status of the charity

The charity is an unincorporated charity registered in England and Wales.

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2025 £
Catchment partnership	-	1,083,359	1,083,359
Invasive species removal and river restoration	84,615	-	84,615
	84,615	1,083,359	1,167,974
Total	84,615	1,083,359	1,167,974
<i>Previous reporting period</i>	<i>Unrestricted</i> £	<i>Restricted</i> £	<i>Total 2024</i> £
<i>Catchment partnership</i>	-	765,423	765,423
<i>Invasive species removal and river restoration</i>	201,944	-	201,944
	201,944	765,423	967,367
Total	201,944	765,423	967,367
4 Investment income		2,025 £	2,024 £
Income from bank deposits		9,793	7,431

All of the charity's investment income arises from money held in interest bearing deposit accounts. All investment income is unrestricted.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

5 Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

	2025	2024
	£	£
Staff costs	635,917	451,054
Contractors expenses	251,444	265,354
Travel and subsistence	46,573	31,092
Stationery and telephone	7,646	1,197
Accountancy fees	6,466	5,294
Meetings	7,341	3,620
Equipment	87,054	38,306
Training	11,743	6,277
Insurance	7,591	4,550
IT costs	1,112	4,399
Administration	45,808	14,158
Miscellaneous	5,029	4,281
Charitable donations	59	100
Legal and professional fees	23,235	11,409
Governance costs		
Independent examiner's fee	-	2,280
Auditor's fee	5,640	
	1,142,658	843,371
	2025	2024
	£	£
Restricted expenditure	974,999	693,957
Unrestricted expenditure	167,659	149,414
	1,142,658	843,371
	1,142,658	843,371

6 Net income/(expenditure) for the year

This is stated after charging/(crediting):	2025	2024
	£	£
Auditor's remuneration - audit fees	3,000	-
Auditor's remuneration - accountancy fees	1,700	-
Independent examiner's fee	-	2,280
	4,700	2,280

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

7 Staff costs

Staff costs during the year were as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Wages and salaries	551,323	390,579
Social security costs	46,574	30,985
Pension costs	38,020	29,490
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	635,917	451,054
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

No employees has employee benefits in excess of £60,000 (2024: Nil).

The average number of staff employed during the period was 24 (2024: 15).

The average full time equivalent number of staff employed during the period was 18.6 (2024: 14.3).

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the trustees, Executive Director Operations and Delivery, Executive Director Strategy Development and the Assistant Director. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £153,953 (2024: £84,821)).

8 Trustee remuneration and expenses, and related party transactions

No (2024:nil) trustee received conference expenses during the year (2024:£nil).

Aggregate donations from related parties were £nil (2024: £nil).

There are no donations from related parties which are outside the normal course of business and no restricted donations from related parties.

No trustee or other person related to the charity had any personal interest in any contract or transaction entered into by the charity, including guarantees, during the year (2024:nil).

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

9 Corporation tax

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within Chapter 3 of Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects. No tax charges have arisen in the charity.

10 Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade debtors	141,208	167,722
Other debtors	584	584
	141,792	168,306
	141,792	168,306

11 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Other creditors and accruals	6,157	4,865
Deferred income	592,947	120,320
Taxation and social security costs	14,706	8,196
	613,810	133,381
	613,810	133,381

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

12 Analysis of movements in restricted funds

Current reporting period	Balance at 1st April 2024 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
Catchment partnership	99,415	1,083,359	(974,999)		207,775
Total	99,415	1,083,359	(974,999)	-	207,775

Previous reporting period	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Catchment partnership	52,758	765,423	(693,957)	(24,809)	99,415
Total	52,758	765,423	(693,957)	(24,809)	99,415

Name of restricted fund

Description, nature and purposes of the fund

Catchment partnership

The Catchment Partnerships and associated projects are part of the DEFRA led initiative Catchment Based Approach (CaBA). The Mersey Rivers Trust receives funding from DEFRA (via the Environment Agency) and the European funded Natural Course Project to host three Catchment Partnerships (Alt/Crossens, Lower Mersey and Upper Mersey Catchments). Funding is also received to deliver other environmental projects from the Environment Agency (Water Environment Improvement Fund (WEIF) and Natural Flood Management Fund and Water Environment Grants). Transfer to unrestricted funds represents expenditure that have not been correctly allocated to restricted funds and surpluses achieved through project efficiencies. The associated projects have been delivered satisfactorily and signed off by the funders.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

13 Analysis of movement in unrestricted funds

Current reporting period	Balance at 1st April 2024 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	As at 31 March 2025 £
General fund	416,254	94,408	(167,659)		343,003
	<u>416,254</u>	<u>94,408</u>	<u>(167,659)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>343,003</u>
Previous reporting period	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	As at 31 March 2024 £
General fund	331,484	209,375	(149,414)	24,809	416,254
	<u>331,484</u>	<u>209,375</u>	<u>(149,414)</u>	<u>24,809</u>	<u>416,254</u>

Name of unrestricted fund Description, nature and purposes of the fund

General fund The free reserves

14 Analysis of net assets between funds

	General fund £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total £
Net current assets/(liabilities)	343,003	-	207,775	550,778
Total	<u>343,003</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>207,775</u>	<u>550,778</u>

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

15 Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities

	2025	2024
	£	£
Net income/(expenditure) for the year	35,109	<i>131,427</i>
Adjustments for:		
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	(9,793)	<i>(7,431)</i>
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	26,514	<i>75,764</i>
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	480,429	<i>(341,372)</i>
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating	532,259	<i>(141,612)</i>
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

16 Prior year Statement of Financial Activities (including Income and Expenditure accounts)

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds 2024 £	<i>Total funds</i> 2023 £
Income from:				
Charitable activities	201,944	765,423	967,367	680,326
Investments	7,431	-	7,431	2,727
Total income	209,375	765,423	974,798	683,053
Expenditure on:				
Charitable activities:	149,414	693,957	843,371	655,243
Total expenditure	149,414	693,957	843,371	655,243
Net income/(expenditure) for	59,961	71,466	131,427	27,810
Transfer between funds	24,809	(24,809)	-	-
Net movement in funds for the year	84,770	46,657	131,427	27,810
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	331,484	52,758	384,242	356,432
Total funds carried forward	416,254	99,415	515,669	384,242

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.
All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

MERSEY RIVERS TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1196777

Accounts

Charity Number: 1196777

Mersey Rivers Trust

Report and financial statements
For the year ended 31 March 2024

Mersey Rivers Trust
Reference and administrative information
for the year ended 31 March 2024

Charity number 1196777

Registered office and operational address Riverview A17 Embankment Business Park Heaton
Mersey Stockport SK3 3GN

Trustees Trustees who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows:

Dr Keith Hendry	Chair	
Professor Peter Batey	Trustee	Retired 6 th November 2023
Mr Christopher Findley	Trustee	
Mr Terence Clive Gaskell	Trustee	Retired 6 th November 2023
Mr Nicolas Carter	Trustee	
Mrs Sarah Jenner	Trustee	
Mr David Thompson	Trustee	
Dr Stephen Boulton	Trustee	
Mr Alex Clegg	Trustee	
Ms Francesca Sullivan	Trustee	

Trustees who held title to property belonging to the charity during the reporting period or at the date of approval were: None

Key management Name Mr Paul Henbrey Operations and Delivery Director

personnel Name John Sanders Strategic Planning and Development Director

Bankers Name Triodos
Address Deanery Road, Bristol, BS1 5A

Solicitors Name Slater Heelis
Address 86 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 2ER DX 14310 Manchester 1

Independent Jennifer Daniel FCCA DChA Slade & Cooper Limited
Examiner Beehive Mill, Jersey Street, Manchester, M4 6JG

Mersey Rivers Trust
Trustees' annual report
for the year ended 31 March 2024

The trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2024.

Reference and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the charity's constitution and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: SORP applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102.

Objectives and activities

The charity was created in 1998 to work in the River Mersey catchment in Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Cheshire, Lancashire and Derbyshire and has the following objectives:

- To promote, encourage and where applicable deliver projects for the preservation, restoration, and development of urban and rural waterways and their environs, including adjacent estuarine and coastal areas as defined in the area of benefit, for the benefit of the public environment and its wildlife.
- To advance education by raising public awareness of the issues relating to securing, improving, and maintaining such urban and rural waterways and their environs.
- To promote and where applicable deliver projects for the use of and access to such urban and rural waterways and watersides in the interests of social welfare for recreation and other leisure-time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the public.

The trustees have reviewed the objectives of the Trust and agreed they are still valid.

Since September 2014, the charity has been a Rivers Trust, part of a national network of Rivers Trusts. The charity pays an annual fee and gains the support of the regional and national directors in carrying out Trust activities including employment of staff. Staff are entitled to a Rivers Trust pension scheme.

In June 2017 the Healthy Waterways Trust (operating under the name of the Healthy Rivers Trust) merged with the Mersey Basin Rivers Trust with a consequential change of name to the Mersey Rivers Trust. The charity continued to operate as a member of the Rivers Trust and benefits from a wider volunteer base and the utilisation of the skills and experience of its staff and Trustees. The Trust converted to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 20 June 2022.

As in recent years the charity has focused on research into water quality and identification and implementation of improvement and engagement projects. It has also been a valuable forum for discussion between local authorities and water professionals. The charity has engaged with local communities as well as professional networks.

The Trustees have identified a number of key long term strategies to help deliver the aims and objectives of the Trust. The Fisheries Strategy aimed at returning native fish species to our rivers has been developed and been implemented. A second strategy, Access and Recreation aimed at improving access to rivers and waterbodies for the purpose recreational activities such as swimming, water sports, walking, cycling and fishing is under development. Action plans identifying short and long term action to deliver these strategies have also been developed.

The charity is committed to working with local groups and volunteers to report and tackle the major pollution issues affecting our rivers such as sewage overflows, industrial pollution, and fly tipping. In addition, we work with Local Authorities, Politicians, Water Companies and other private companies to highlight issues, develop and implement improvements and identify funding.

Mersey Rivers Trust
Trustees' annual report
for the year ended 31 March 2024

The involvement of local volunteers continues to be a key focus area. The charity has engaged with 200 volunteers (in excess of 1000 volunteer hours) in the reporting period to help deliver Citizen Science monitoring, invasive species control, riverside litter picks and river restoration projects. The Trust actively supports groups who work to clean up and enhance local rivers such as the Tame Working Group, Beacon (River Bollin action group) and several "Friends" groups (volunteers who have particular interest in a river or area).

The trustees review the aims, objectives and activities of the charity each year. This report looks at what the charity has achieved and the outcomes of its work in the reporting period. The trustees report the success of each key activity and the benefits the charity has brought to those groups of people that it is set up to help. The review also helps the trustees ensure the charity's aims, objectives and activities remained focused on its stated purposes.

The trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning its future activities. In particular, the trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives that have been set

Achievements and performance

The charity's main activities and who it tries to help are described below. All its charitable activities focus on the rivers, waterbodies and their environs in the Mersey Catchment and are undertaken to further the charity's charitable purposes for the public benefit and in line with FRS102. The Trust has continued to develop and grow to meet the extensive water quality, river habitat and flood risk issues in the Mersey Catchment and has a significant portfolio of approved and funded projects. Permanent staff numbers have remained constant however temporary staff have been employed to deliver peak workloads. The Trust was again awarded the hosting of three "Catchment Based Approach" (CaBA) catchment partnerships funded by DEFRA via the Environment Agency (£15k per partnership). The team contributed to developing Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) for Liverpool City Region, Greater Manchester and Cheshire.

In Cheshire, the Bentley Environmental Foundation-sponsored project focused on river restoration along part of Valley Brook, completing habitat surveys, designing project interventions, and securing landowner agreements. Community engagement included an Easter arts and crafts event for children, litter picks with the Crewe Clean Team, a corporate volunteering day with Bentley employees, and a career fair at Manchester Metropolitan University, where two trainee roles were filled. Additional outreach involved a Riverfly monitoring training session for 30 conservation students and initial engagement with local farms about sustainable farming through postcards and in-person visits.

The Trust managed significant work on Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) through the Cheshire Local Action Group (LAG) Fund (Defra funding). INNS surveys were conducted, and management data were transferred to GIS for future planning. Volunteer recruitment was highly successful, with 27 new volunteers contributing over 1,000 hours across 44 work parties, controlling 25km of riverbank. Four volunteers received training in INNS control, and the necessary equipment was purchased for volunteer groups. Volunteers were also supported with permits to use herbicides near water bodies.

This year saw interventions across nine farms in the Upper Weaver catchment, including installing 217 metres of guttering, 281 square metres of concreting in farmyards to help prevent pollution, and 1.7 kilometres of watercourse fencing to reduce livestock entering rivers and damaging river banks. Funding of £35,000 was awarded to support these interventions. Five water management plans were developed for farms, and a "Pie and Pint" event was held for engagement with farmers at Darley Brook.

Mersey Rivers Trust
Trustees' annual report
for the year ended 31 March 2024

The charity continued its work with stakeholders through BEACON (Bollin Environmental Action and Conservation), organising catchment planning meetings, volunteer work parties, and social events to maintain strong relationships with members.

Collaboration with Stockport Council deepened this year, resulting in a successful application to the Environment Agency's (EA) Quick Wins fund. This funded natural flood management projects, including leaky dams and a flood attenuation basin at Bruntwood Park and Cheadle Golf Course. The Upper Mersey Catchment Partnership established three sub-groups focusing on priority watercourses. The Tame Working Group received particular attention, including a visit from a local MP and securing funding from the EA Fisheries Improvement Fund for river habitat improvement works. In Reddish Vale on the River Tame, additional funding from the Greater Manchester Environment Fund enabled the recruitment of three new volunteers from Brinnington, an area of social deprivation. Funding was also obtained for the Tame Working Group to provide power tools and scything training to enhance volunteering efforts further. The Micker/Norbury group worked on river restoration priorities for this tributary of the Upper Mersey, engaging 'Friends of' groups and training volunteers as River Guardians.

A new Senior Project Manager was appointed, who took over management of the Lower Mersey and Alt Crossens team, including the role of hosting the CaBA Catchment Partnerships. The team delivered a pilot Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) project for the new Liverpool City Region Headbolt Lane railway station, offsetting biodiversity loss from the station construction. The project enhanced wetlands, hedgerows, ponds, and woodlands, securing 24 BNG units. This project also helped the charity gain experience using the BNG metric and delivering various biodiversity interventions.

The Alt Catchment saw a successful bid for a £2.1 million Natural Flood Management (NFM) programme, designed to implement measures such as leaky dams, wetlands, and sand dune management across the River Alt catchment during 2024 to 2026. This builds on previous NFM work delivered during the report year, including 19 leaky dams at Howard's Pits and Little Wood and enhancing the River Alt wetland at Croxteth Park. The team also developed a river restoration project at Alt Meadows, liaising with the Liverpool City Council on integrating this work with commercial development plans.

In addition, the team completed a pesticide sampling project for the Environment Agency across the Alt/Crossens catchment, with results informing targeted interventions in high-contamination areas. The team completed the feasibility study for the Alt Weir removal, setting the stage for an application for funding for the project's removal phase. They also began a lowland peat monitoring project funded by Defra to provide local farms with data to improve water management and conservation practices on peat soils. The charity continued to support ecological surveys and worked on the Championing Coastal Coordination (3Cs) project, culminating in a stakeholder workshop for the development of a Mersey Estuary & Coastline "Blueprint" document.

Beneficiaries of our services

The Trust aims to improve the aquatic environment of the River Mersey catchment in the Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Merseyside, Lancashire and Derbyshire areas for the benefit of local communities, anglers and other river users, environmental action groups and other organisations with similar objectives. Improvements to the environment will benefit the public through cleaner and healthier rivers with improved access, education and awareness through public events and volunteer activities.

Mersey Rivers Trust
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Financial review

The Trust continues to be run on a sound and improving financial basis and has been successful in gaining funding for major projects across the catchment. Good financial management has maintained a positive cash flow hence reducing risk and ensuring creditors are paid within payment terms.

The total income received in the reporting period was £974,798 (£683,053:2023) and expenditure of £843,371 (£655,243 :2023). The net income/expenditure of £131,427 resulted from income received for in year projects which were delayed and will be completed in the following financial year and project efficiencies on unrestricted contract work.

The increase in income and expenditure compared with the last reporting period is largely due to the longer accounting period (12 months) than 2023 (9 months) resulting from the switch from an unincorporated charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 20 June 2022.

The key expenditure areas associated with charitable activities such as partnership hosting and project delivery are staff costs (salaries, National Insurance and Pension contributions) of £451,054. Staff costs on a like-for-like basis (pro rata to account for the longer accounting period) increased by 5% because of pay increases to reflect the higher cost of living, additional staff joining the pension scheme and temporary staff employed to deliver peak workload.

The Trust is almost wholly funded by grants and awards to complete environmental projects and initiatives. The principal source of funding is the Environment Agency through its Water and Environment Improvement Fund, Natural Flood Management Fund and Catchment Based Approach. However, the Trust identified this as a medium/low risk due to a potential reduction in future Government spending and has actively tried to find alternative funding sources to reduce the reliance on Environment Agency funding. The funding is used to deliver projects using Mersey Rivers Trust staff (staff costs recovery) and the use of contractors and consultants (project management). A small number of directly contracted works were carried out on behalf of our partners.

The Trust's unrestricted funds have increased to £416,445 (£331,484: 2023 for a 9-month reporting period) reflecting efficiency savings and small surpluses made on unrestricted contracts. The Trust has also identified additional projects which it will fund from unrestricted funds to be delivered in 2024/25.

Restricted funds increased to £99,415 (£52,758: 2023) mainly because of the carry-over of funding for multi-year projects.

Reserves policy

Reserves are that part of the Trust's funds which are freely available for its general purpose after it has met its commitments and covered its other planned expenditure. These unrestricted funds are needed to bridge the gap between the spending and receiving of income and to cover administrative, fundraising and support costs without which the Trust could not function. The trustees consider that due to the expansion and future growth plans for the Trust the ideal level of reserves as of 31st March 2024 would be in the region of £297,000 being 6 months (or 50%) of future annual base operating costs (2024/25) for salaries, insurance, accounting, governance and general administration costs.

The unrestricted "General Fund" of £416,254 includes MRT planned funding (£172,320) to deliver MRT identified projects. The balance of the General Fund of £243,943 will be regarded as 'MRT Reserves'. Reserves have increased by £44,531 from 2022/23 primarily as a result of efficiencies made on project delivery and a reduction in the amount spent on MRT identified projects included in the General Fund.

The reserves stand at 43% of base annual operating costs, lower than the stated reserve policy figure of 50%. The decrease in the percentage of reserves is mainly due to increased staff costs (additional

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staff to meet the expected increase in project delivery and strategic development). This will be offset in future years where possible by future project efficiencies and donations.

Plans for the future

We will continue to deliver our short-term plans which are aligned to our long-term objectives (2050 given the scale of the challenges faced in the Mersey Basin).

The 2050 outcomes will guide the shorter-term strategy for the growth and development of the Trust over the next three years. Allied to the longer-term outcomes, we have developed the following key priorities for the period 2024 to 2027:

- Continue to build robust survey evidence and deliver appropriate measures for river habitat and water quality enhancement in our priority catchments covering:
 - River Irk catchment
 - River Bollin catchment
 - River Tame catchment
 - River Alt catchment
- Additionally, we will continue to grow our activities in the Weaver/Gowy and the wider Alt/Crossens catchments which have had a lesser focus historically:
 - Continue to work with EA and Natural England on the Alt/Crossens engagement activities with local farming communities
 - Farm advice and support of interventions to reduce agricultural impact on receiving watercourses in the Weaver catchment.
 - Build relationships with local Authorities to develop partnership bids to fund measures to address flooding issues utilising Natural Flood Management techniques.
- The basin-wide footprint of the Trust is a key benefit so we can take a holistic approach. We will therefore seek to maintain the balance between activities in the upper Mersey basin (i.e. Greater Manchester) and the lower Mersey basin (i.e. Cheshire and Merseyside).
- Deliver natural flood management solutions targeted in dialogue with flood risk authorities to those communities that will benefit most from these solutions.
- Expand our education and engagement with local communities in our target catchments, increasing our River Guardian volunteers, volunteer inputs and encouraging local ownership ("Friends" groups).
- Continue to deliver the Trust's fisheries strategy including agreed priority actions, such as targeted monitoring, addressing migration barriers, physical habitat improvements and improving our engagement with the angling community.
- Completion of an access and recreation strategy for the river systems in the Mersey catchment.
- Improve access and aesthetic quality of the water environment in our priority catchments to encourage more people to gain benefits from their local waterways. This will particularly involve working with our volunteers and "Friends Groups" (including BEACON) with litter clean-ups and carrying out small-scale works to improve access to waterways and enhance biodiversity and river habitat.
- Enhance and expand our relationships with key delivery partners - principally other Third Sector organisations – to support future funding bids.
- Continue to strengthen our links to academic institutions in the Mersey Basin to identify opportunities for collaboration and encourage research into innovative solutions to the challenges we face in the catchment.
- The Trust will also review its operating structure to ensure a fit for purpose organisation designed to meet the significant water quality issues in the Mersey catchment.
- Development of additional key Strategies to include, Access and Recreation and Water Quality

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Structure, governance and management

Healthy Waterways Trust was constituted by Trust Deed dated 6 October 1998 and deed of variation dated 1st July 1999 and was a registered charity No. 01073152. The Trust was renamed The Mersey Rivers Trust in May 2017.

The Trust applied to the Charity Commission to convert to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The main driver for this action was to reduce the administrative burden of reporting to both the Charity Commission and Companies House (as a Limited Company). The Mersey Rivers Trust Limited Company has been closed and "struck off" the Companies House register. The application to become a CIO was accepted and registered on 25 November 2021. The Trust worked with the Charity Commission to transfer the assets and business of the original Trust to the new CIO which was completed on 20 June 2022.

The Trust constituted itself as a "Foundation CIO" whose only voting members are its charity trustees. The trustees are members of the charity, but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

Appointment of Trustees

The first and current trustees were appointed (and may be removed) by its board of trustees. There should be one third of the trustees or two trustees, whichever is the greater, of those attending a meeting to be quorate.

The charitable objectives of the Trust are such that the trustees believe that it is essential to ensure that the management of the charity is effective and in line with good practice in the charitable sector. In addition, the areas of activity require experience, knowledge and expertise in river basin management, water resources, environmental management and protection, local government and the voluntary sector. The trustees annually review the membership of the trust to ensure an appropriate balance of management, and more specialist expertise is available. New trustees are appointed following consideration by the existing trustees collectively. Trustees may serve for a maximum period of three years before standing down or seeking re-election. Each new Trustee undertakes an induction process based on Charity Commission guidance (CC3). Regular updates and events e.g. Charity Commission news, regulatory changes or potential issues are notified to the Trustees by the Directors.

All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in note 8 to the accounts.

The Trustees delegate the day-to-day operation of the charity including its bank accounts to its two Executive Directors, Mr Paul Henbrey and Mr John Sanders. Governance and strategic direction to meet the objectives of the charity are led by the Trustees.

Related parties and relationships with other organisations

No trustee receives remuneration or other benefit for their work with the charity. Any contractual relationship with a related party must be disclosed: in the current or previous year, no such related party transactions were reported.

The charity does not have any subsidiaries. The Charity is a member of the national Rivers Trust movement, an umbrella organisation for local Rivers Trust in England, Wales and Ireland. The Rivers Trust campaigns on national issues and provides advice, guidance and support to local Trusts.

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Trustees' annual report
for the year ended 31 March 2024

Remuneration policy for key management personnel

Remuneration for key staff (Operations and Delivery Director and the Strategic Planning and Development Director) is aligned to the national Rivers Trust guidance "Pay Guide for Rivers Trusts October 2023".

The post of Director is designated as Grade 6 – "Director of a medium/large sized Trust". The appointment of Paul Henbrey was made in November 2016 and John Sanders in July 2019. Remuneration will be reviewed annually by the Trustees.

Risk management

The monitoring and management of risk is a dynamic process, and the charity faces some level of risk in the activities, events and contracts that it engages in. The trustees have a risk management strategy which comprises:

- an annual review of the principal risks and uncertainties that the charity may face;
- the establishment of policies, systems and procedures to mitigate those risks identified in the annual review; and
- the implementation of procedures, designed to minimise or manage any potential impact the charity should those risks materialise.
 - Governance risks - eg inappropriate organisational structure, difficulties recruiting trustees with relevant skills, conflict of interest;
 - Financial risks - eg accuracy and timeliness of financial information, adequacy of reserves and cash flow, diversity of income sources;
 - External risks - eg public perception and adverse publicity, demographic changes, government policy.

Compliance with law and regulation - eg breach of trust law and regulatory requirements of particular activities such as fund-raising.

The charity's review of its risk management will continue to help ensure:

- the charity's aims are achieved more effectively.
- significant risks are known and monitored enabling trustees to make a more effective contribution.
- there is improved forward planning.

Fundraising

The Trust does not carry out direct fundraising activities.

Mersey Rivers Trust
Trustees' annual report
for the year ended 31 March 2024

Funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others

The Trust does not hold funds or other assets on behalf of other individuals or organisations.

Statement of responsibilities of the trustees

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 charity's financial activities during the period and of its financial position at the end of the period. In preparing financial statements giving a true and fair view, the trustees should follow best practice and:

- 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 UK Accounting Standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation

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. 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.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The trustees' annual report has been approved by the trustees on 27 November 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

Dr Keith Hendry
Chair

Independent examiner's report
to the members of
Mersey Rivers Trust

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024 which are set out on pages 11 to 23.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees 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 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

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no 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; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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.

Jennifer Daniel FCCA DChA

Slade & Cooper Limited, Chartered Certified Accountants
Beehive Mill, Jersey Street
Manchester, M4 6JG

Date 17 December 2024

Mersey Rivers Trust
Statement of Financial Activities
(including Income and Expenditure account)
for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Income from:					
Charitable activities	3	201,944	765,423	967,367	680,326
Investments	4	7,431	-	7,431	2,727
Total income		209,375	765,423	974,798	683,053
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities:	5	149,414	693,957	843,371	655,243
Total expenditure		149,414	693,957	843,371	655,243
Net income/(expenditure) for the year	6	59,961	71,466	131,427	27,810
Transfer between funds		24,809	(24,809)	-	-
Net movement in funds for the year		84,770	46,657	131,427	27,810
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		331,484	52,758	384,242	356,432
Total funds carried forward		416,254	99,415	515,669	384,242

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Balance sheet as at 31 March 2024

	Note	2024		2023	
		£	£	£	£
Current assets					
Debtors	10	168,306		244,070	
Cash at bank and in hand		480,744		614,925	
		<u>649,050</u>		<u>858,995</u>	
Liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due in less than one year	11	(133,381)		(474,753)	
		<u>515,669</u>		<u>384,242</u>	
Net current assets			515,669		384,242
Net assets			515,669		384,242
The funds of the charity:					
Restricted income funds	12		99,415		52,758
Unrestricted income funds	13		416,254		331,484
			<u>515,669</u>		<u>384,242</u>
Total charity funds			515,669		384,242

The notes on pages 14 to 23 form part of these accounts.

Approved by the trustees on 27/ 11/ 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

Dr Keith Hendry (Chair)

Mersey Rivers Trust
Statement of Cash Flows
for the year ending 31 March 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	#	(141,612)	(205,431)
<i>Cash flows from investing activities:</i>			
Dividends, interest, and rents from investments		7,431	2,727
Cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		7,431	2,727
Increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the year		(134,181)	(202,704)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		614,925	817,629
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		480,744	614,925

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024

1 Accounting policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgments and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

a Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), second edition - October 2019 (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared to give a 'true and fair view' and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), second edition - October 2019, rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

Mersey Rivers Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note.

b Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

The trustees have made no key judgments which have a significant effect on the accounts.

The trustees do not consider that there are any sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amount of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

c Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

For legacies, entitlement is taken as the earlier of the date on which either: the charity is aware that probate has been granted, the estate has been finalised and notification has been made by the executor(s) to the charity that a distribution will be made, or when a distribution is received from the estate. Receipt of a legacy, in whole or in part, is only considered probable when the amount can be measured reliably and the charity has been notified of the executor's intention to make a distribution. Where legacies have been notified to the charity, or the charity is aware of the granting of probate, and the criteria for income recognition have not been met, then the legacy is treated as a contingent asset and disclosed if material.

Income received in advance of a provision of a specified service is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

d Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the Bank.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

e Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of charity.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose.

Restricted funds are donations and partnership agreements which the funder has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity.

f Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Expenditure on charitable activities includes salary payments, payments to contractors and other administration costs undertaken to further the purposes of
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

h Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

i Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

j Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

k Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

l Pensions

Employees of the charity are entitled to join a defined contribution scheme. The charity's contribution is restricted to the contributions disclosed in note 8. There were no outstanding contributions at the year end.

2 Legal status of the charity

The charity is an unincorporated charity registered in England and Wales.

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2024 £
Catchment partnership	-	765,423	765,423
Invasive species removal and river restoration	201,944	-	201,944
	201,944	765,423	967,367
Total	201,944	765,423	967,367
<i>Previous reporting period</i>	<i>Unrestricted</i> £	<i>Restricted</i> £	<i>Total 2023</i> £
<i>Catchment partnership</i>	-	342,729	342,729
<i>Invasive species removal and river restoration</i>	337,597	-	337,597
	337,597	342,729	680,326
<i>Subtotal for activity 1</i>	<i>337,597</i>	<i>342,729</i>	<i>680,326</i>
4 Investment income		2,024 £	2,023 £
Income from bank deposits		7,431	2,727
		7,431	2,727

All of the charity's investment income arises from money held in interest bearing deposit accounts. All investment income is unrestricted.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

5 Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

	2024	2023
	£	£
Staff costs	451,054	335,399
Contractors expenses	265,354	231,942
Travel and subsistence	31,092	16,618
Stationery and telephone	1,197	2,512
Accountancy fees	5,294	3,778
Meetings	3,620	1,320
Equipment	38,306	26,231
Training	6,277	5,730
Insurance	4,550	6,242
IT costs	4,399	1,167
Administration	14,158	13,582
Miscellaneous	4,281	988
Charitable donations	100	100
Legal and professional fees	11,409	7,474
Governance costs		
Independent examiner's fee	2,280	2,160
	843,371	655,243
	2024	2023
	£	£
Restricted expenditure	693,957	424,642
Unrestricted expenditure	149,414	230,601
	843,371	655,243
	843,371	655,243

6 Net income/(expenditure) for the year

	2024	2023
	£	£
This is stated after charging/(crediting):		
Independent examiner's fee	2,280	2,160
	2,280	2,160

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

7 Staff costs

Staff costs during the year were as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	390,579	287,825
Social security costs	30,985	27,092
Pension costs	29,490	20,482
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	451,054	335,399
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

No employees has employee benefits in excess of £60,000 (2023: Nil).

The average number of staff employed during the period was 15 (2023: 14).

The average full time equivalent number of staff employed during the period was 14.3 (2023: 12).

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the trustees and the Executive Director Operations and Delivery and Executive Director Strategy Development. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £84,821 (2023: £76,955).

8 Trustee remuneration and expenses, and related party transactions

No (2023:nil) trustee received conference expenses during the year (2023:£nil).

Aggregate donations from related parties were £xyz (2023: £nil).

There are no donations from related parties which are outside the normal course of business and no restricted donations from related parties.

No trustee or other person related to the charity had any personal interest in any contract or transaction entered into by the charity, including guarantees, during the year (2023:nil).

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

9 Corporation tax

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within Chapter 3 of Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects. No tax charges have arisen in the charity.

10 Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	167,722	243,486
Other debtors	584	584
	168,306	244,070
	168,306	244,070

11 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Other creditors and accruals	4,865	7,522
Deferred income	120,320	458,832
Taxation and social security costs	8,196	8,399
	133,381	474,753
	133,381	474,753

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

12 Analysis of movements in restricted funds

Current reporting period	Balance at 1st April 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Catchment partnership	52,758	765,423	(693,957)	(24,809)	99,415
Total	52,758	765,423	(693,957)	(24,809)	99,415

Previous reporting period	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Catchment partnership	134,671	342,729	(424,642)	-	52,758
Total	134,671	342,729	(424,642)	-	52,758

Name of restricted fund

Description, nature and purposes of the fund

Catchment partnership

The Catchment Partnerships and associated projects are part of the DEFRA led initiative Catchment Based Approach (CaBA). The Mersey Rivers Trust receives funding from DEFRA (via the Environment Agency) and the European funded Natural Course Project to host three Catchment Partnerships (Alt/Crossens, Lower Mersey and Upper Mersey Catchments). Funding is also received to deliver other environmental projects from the Environment Agency (Water Environment Improvement Fund (WEIF) and Natural Flood Management Fund and Water Environment Grants). Transfer to unrestricted funds represents expenditure that have not been correctly allocated to restricted funds and surpluses achieved through project efficiencies. The associated projects have been delivered satisfactorily and signed off by the funders.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

13 Analysis of movement in unrestricted funds

Current reporting period	Balance at 1st April 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	As at 31 March 2024 £
General fund	331,484	209,375	(149,414)	24,809	416,254
	331,484	209,375	(149,414)	24,809	416,254
Previous reporting period	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	As at 31 March 2023 £
General fund	221,761	340,324	(230,601)	-	331,484
	221,761	340,324	(230,601)	-	331,484

Name of unrestricted fund	Description, nature and purposes of the fund
----------------------------------	---

General fund	The free reserves
--------------	-------------------

14 Analysis of net assets between funds

	General fund £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total £
Net current assets/(liabilities)	416,254	-	99,415	515,669
Total	416,254	-	99,415	515,669

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

15 Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Net income/(expenditure) for the year	131,427	27,810
Adjustments for:		
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	(7,431)	(2,727)
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	75,764	(221,308)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	(341,372)	(9,206)
	(141,612)	(205,431)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating	(141,612)	(205,431)

MERSEY RIVERS TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1196777

Accounts

Charity Number: 1196777

Mersey Rivers Trust

Report and financial statements
For the period ended 31 March 2023

Mersey Rivers Trust
Reference and administrative information
for the period ended 31 March 2023

Charity number 1196777

Registered office and operational address Riverview A17 Embankment Business Park Heaton
Mersey Stockport SK3 3GN

Trustees Trustees who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows:

Dr Keith Hendry	Chair
Professor Peter Batey	Trustee
Mr Christopher Findley	Trustee
Mr Terence Clive Gaskell	Trustee
Mr Nicolas Carter	Trustee
Mrs Sarah Jenner	Trustee
Mr David Thompson	Trustee
Dr Stephen Boulton	Trustee
Mr Alex Clegg	Trustee
Ms Francesca Sullivan	Trustee

Trustees who held title to property belonging to the charity during the reporting period or at the date of approval were:

No property held by Trustees.

Key management Mr Paul Henbrey Operations and Delivery Director

personnel Mr John Sanders Strategic Planning and Development Director

Bankers

Name	Triodos
Address	Deanery Road, Bristol, BS1 5A

Solicitors

Name	Slater Heelis
Address	86 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 2ER DX 14310 Manchester 1

Independent Jennifer Daniel FCCA DChA Slade & Cooper Limited
Examiner Beehive Mill, Jersey Street, Manchester, M4 6JG

Mersey Rivers Trust
Trustees' annual report
for the period ended 31 March 2023

The trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements for the 9 months period ended 31st March 2023.

Reference and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the charity's constitution, and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: SORP applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102.

Objectives and activities

The charity was created in 1998 to work in Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Cheshire and Lancashire and has the following objectives:

- To promote, encourage and where applicable deliver projects for the preservation, restoration, and development of urban and rural waterways and their environs, including adjacent estuarine and coastal areas as defined in the area of benefit, for the benefit of the public environment and its wildlife.
- To advance education by raising public awareness of the issues relating to securing, improving, and maintaining such urban and rural waterways and their environs.
- To promote and where applicable deliver projects for the use of and access and to such urban and rural waterways and watersides in the interests of social welfare for recreation and other leisure-time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the public.

The trustees have reviewed the objectives of the Trust and agreed they are still valid.

Since September 2014, the charity has been a Rivers Trust, part of a national network of Rivers Trusts. The charity pays an annual fee and gains the support of the regional and national directors in carrying out Trust activities including employment of staff. Staff are entitled to a Rivers Trust pension scheme.

In June 2017 the Healthy Waterways Trust (operating under the name of the Healthy Rivers Trust) merged with the Mersey Basin Rivers Trust with a consequential change of name to the Mersey Rivers Trust. The charity continued to operate as a member of the Rivers Trust and benefits from a wider volunteer base and the utilisation of the skills and experience of its staff and Trustees. The Trust converted to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 20 June 2022.

As in recent years the charity has focused on research into water quality and identification and implementation of improvement and engagement projects. It has also been a valuable forum for discussion between local authorities and water professionals. The charity has engaged with local communities as well as professional networks.

The Trustees have identified a number of key long term strategies to help deliver the aims and objectives of the Trust. The Fisheries Strategy aimed at returning native fish species to our rivers has been developed and been implemented. A second strategy, Access and Recreation aimed at improving access to rivers and waterbodies for the purpose recreational activities such as swimming, water sports, walking, cycling and fishing is under development. Action plans identifying short and long term action to deliver these strategies have also been developed.

The charity is committed to working with local groups and volunteers to report and tackle the major pollution issues affecting our rivers such as sewage overflows, industrial pollution, and fly tipping. In addition, we work with Local Authorities, Politicians, Water Companies and other private companies to highlight issues, develop and implement improvements and identify funding.

Mersey Rivers Trust
Trustees' annual report
for the period ended 31 March 2023

The involvement of local volunteers continues to be a key focus area. The charity has engaged with 263 volunteers in the reporting period to help deliver Citizen Science monitoring, invasive species control, riverside litter picks and river restoration projects.

The trustees review the aims, objectives and activities of the charity each year. This report looks at what the charity has achieved and the outcomes of its work in the reporting period. The trustees report the success of each key activity and the benefits the charity has brought to those groups of people that it is set up to help. The review also helps the trustees ensure the charity's aims, objectives and activities remained focused on its stated purposes.

The trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning its future activities. In particular, the trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives that have been set.

Achievements and performance

The charity's main activities and who it tries to help are described below. All its charitable activities focus on the rivers, waterbodies and their environs in the Mersey Catchment and are undertaken to further the charity's charitable purposes for the public benefit and in line with FRS102.

The Trust has continued to develop and grow to meet the extensive water quality issues in the Mersey Catchment and has a significant portfolio of approved and funded projects. Permanent staff numbers have remained constant however temporary staff have been employed to deliver peak workloads.

The Trust was again awarded the hosting of three "Catchment Based Approach" (CaBA) catchment partnerships funded by DEFRA via the Environment Agency (£15k per partnership). The hosting of partnership meetings was mainly carried out using video conferencing and webinars however some "live" meetings were introduced towards the end of the financial year. All three partnerships delivered the Environment Agency's "National Success Measures"

The Trust continues to deliver multi-year river-based improvement projects funded from donations via Enforcement Undertakings relating to the Norbury and Micker Brook sub-catchments. Both projects involved working with partners including Groundwork Greater Manchester and local action groups to identify and deliver local actions such as river clean ups, tree planting and habitat improvements.

Building on the success of the project to deliver 60 farm management plans and farm interventions in the Upper Weaver with Severn Rivers Trust and United Utilities the Trust received further funding from the Environment Agency to continue working with farmers to resolve pollution from agricultural activities. An additional 85 farms were engaged through farm visits, agricultural hubs and invitations to presentations.

Ahead of the proposed implementation of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements (due January 2024), the Trust was chosen by Mersey Travel to deliver a pilot project to offset the biodiversity impact of a new railway station in Knowsley, Liverpool. Phase 1 of the project involved the identification of measures to deliver BNG credits in the surrounding area with an additional focus on river and wetlands. The Trust has also been selected to deliver the agreed measures in 2023/24.

In partnership with and funded by Highways England the Trust worked with landowners to identify and deliver opportunities to reduce the risk of flooding along major road corridors in the Irwell and Etherow Catchments. MRT provided initial identification and engagement of landowners and farmers and agreed interventions which were then wholly or partly funded by the Trust using advanced fund supplied by

Mersey Rivers Trust
Trustees' annual report
for the period ended 31 March 2023

Highways England. At the end of the reporting period 75% of the agreed interventions have been funded and completed by landowners.

The Trust focussed on three river systems, the River Tame, River Irk and the River Bollin, to deliver a range of activities including working with schools and colleges in socially deprived areas to educate and raise awareness of local rivers, control of invasive species and working with volunteers and action groups to clean up rivers through local litter picks along riverbanks.

Several bids to the UK Government's Green Recovery programme were submitted either by MRT or MRT through other partners and funding was awarded for work on the River Tame, River Irk and River Bollin. In addition, this funding also supported the running of a trainee project aimed at young people aged between 18-25 resulting in the appointment of a trainee for a period of one year. The trainee has benefitted from significant training and work experience which will prepare them to seek full time employment.

Funding was received from the European Open Rivers Programme to carry out feasibility studies primarily during the next reporting period (2023-24) to remove weirs on the River Alt and River Tonge aligned to the delivery of our fisheries strategy to aid the return of native fish species. If feasible the Trust will apply for further funding to remove the weirs.

The Trust has maintained contact with our volunteer base working with 263 volunteers across a number of events and initiatives such as river clean-ups (16 events), citizen science monitoring (over 50 volunteers trained), litter pick events (5) and habitat improvement measures (14.3ha improved). Volunteers and staff members planted 34,353 trees as part of flood risk reduction measures or habitat improvements.

A key focus was education with the Trust working with 13 schools and engaging with 613 pupils in classroom and/or outdoor site-based events.

Beneficiaries of our services

The Trust aims to improve the aquatic environment in the Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Merseyside areas for the benefit of local communities, anglers and other river users, environmental action groups and other organisations with similar objectives. Improvements to the environment will benefit the public through cleaner and healthier looking rivers with improved access, education and awareness through public events and volunteer activities.

Financial review

The Trust continues to be run on a sound and improving financial basis resulting from significant donations (Enforcement Undertakings) received in prior years and from grants to deliver environmental projects.

The total income received in the 9 month reporting period was £683,053 (£936,662: 2022 for a 15 month reporting period) and expenditure of £653,083 (£1,130,897: 2022 for a 15 month reporting period). The net income/expenditure of £27,810 resulted from income received for in year projects which were delayed and will be completed in the following financial year and project efficiencies on unrestricted contract work.

The decrease in income and expenditure compared with the last reporting period is largely due to the shorter accounting period resulting from the switch from an unincorporated charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 20 June 2022.

Mersey Rivers Trust
Trustees' annual report
for the period ended 31 March 2023

The key expenditure areas associated with charitable activities such as partnership hosting and project delivery are staff costs (salaries, National Insurance and Pension contributions) of £335,399. Staff costs on a like-for-like basis (pro rata to account for the shorter accounting period increased by 11% because of pay increases to reflect the higher cost of living, additional staff joining the pension scheme and temporary staff employed to deliver peak workload).

The Trust is almost wholly funded by grants and awards to complete environmental projects and initiatives. The principal source of funding is the Environment Agency through its Water and Environment Improvement Fund, Natural Flood Management Fund and Catchment Based Approach. However, the Trust identified this as a medium risk due to a potential reduction in future Government spending and has actively tried to find alternative funding sources to reduce the reliance on Environment Agency funding. The funding is used to deliver projects using Mersey Rivers Trust staff (staff costs recovery) and the use of contractors and consultants (project management). A small number of directly contracted works were carried out on behalf of our partners.

The Trust's unrestricted funds have increased for the 9 month reporting period to £331,484 (£221,761: 2022 for a 15 month reporting period) reflecting efficiency savings and small surpluses made on unrestricted contracts. The Trust has also identified additional projects which it will fund from unrestricted funds to be delivered in 2023/24.

Restricted funds decreased to £52,758 (£134,671: 2022) mainly as a result of using up restricted funds brought forward from previous period.

Reserves policy

Reserves are considered to be that part of the Trust's funds which are freely available for its general purpose after it has met its commitments and covered its other planned expenditure. These unrestricted funds are needed to bridge the gap between the spending and receiving of income and to cover administrative, fundraising and support costs without which the Trust could not function. The trustees consider that due to the expansion and future growth plans for the Trust the ideal level of reserves as of 31st March 2023 would be in the region of £210,000 being 6 months (or 50%) of future annual base operating costs (2023/24) for salaries, insurance, accounting, governance and general administration costs.

The unrestricted "General Fund" of £331,484 includes MRT planned funding (£132,072) to deliver MRT identified projects. The balance of the General Fund of £199,412 will be regarded as 'MRT Reserves'. Reserves have increased by £34,136 from 2021/22 primarily as a result efficiencies made on project delivery and a reduction in the amount spent on MRT identified projects included in the General Fund.

The reserves stand at 43% of base annual operating costs, lower than the stated reserve policy figure. This will be offset in future years where possible by future project efficiencies and donations.

Plans for the Future

We will continue to deliver our short-term plans which are aligned to our long-term objectives (2050 given the scale of the challenges faced in the Mersey Basin).

Mersey Rivers Trust
Trustees' annual report
for the period ended 31 March 2023

The 2050 outcomes will guide the shorter-term strategy for the growth and development of the Trust over the next three years. Allied to the longer-term outcomes, we have developed the following key priorities for the period 2024 to 2027:

- Continue to build robust survey evidence and deliver appropriate measures for river habitat and water quality enhancement in our priority catchments covering:
 - River Irk catchment
 - River Bollin catchment
 - River Tame catchment
 - River Alt catchment
 - Norbury Brook (including Micker Brook and Ladybrook) sub-catchment of the Upper Mersey
 - Rivacre Brook catchment (Wirral)
 - "Speke to Spike" northern waterfront of the Mersey Estuary (from the Speke-Garston coastal reserve upstream to Spike Island near Widnes)
- Additionally, we will continue to grow our activities in the Weaver/Gowry and the wider Alt/Crossens catchments which have had a lesser focus historically:
 - Continue to work with EA and Natural England on the Alt/Crossens engagement activities with local farming communities
 - Farm advice and support of interventions to reduce agricultural impact on receiving watercourses in the Bollin and Weaver catchments.
- The basin-wide footprint of the Trust is a key benefit so we can take a holistic approach. We will therefore seek to maintain the balance between activities in the upper Mersey basin (i.e. Greater Manchester) and the lower Mersey basin (i.e. Cheshire and Merseyside).
- Deliver natural flood management solutions targeted in dialogue with flood risk authorities to those communities that will benefit most from these solutions.
- Expand our education and engagement with local communities in our target catchments, increasing our River Guardian volunteers, volunteer inputs and encouraging local ownership ("Friends" groups).
- Continue to deliver the Trust's fisheries strategy including agreed priority actions, such as targeted monitoring, addressing migration barriers, physical habitat improvements and improving our engagement with the angling community.
- Completion of an access and recreation strategy for the river systems in the Mersey catchment.
- Improve access and aesthetic quality of the water environment in our priority catchments to encourage more people to gain benefits from their local waterways. This will particularly involve working with our volunteers and "Friends Groups" (including BEACON) with litter clean-ups and carrying out small-scale works to improve access to waterways and enhance biodiversity and river habitat.
- Enhance and expand our relationships with key delivery partners - principally other Third Sector organisations - to support future funding bids.
- Strengthen our links to academic institutions in the Mersey Basin to identify opportunities for collaboration and encourage research into innovative solutions to the challenges we face in the catchment.
- The Trust will also review its operating structure to ensure a fit for purpose organisation designed to meet the significant water quality issues in the Mersey catchment.

Structure, governance and management

Healthy Waterways Trust was constituted by Trust Deed dated 6 October 1998 and deed of variation dated 1st July 1999 and was a registered charity No. 01073152. The Trust was renamed The Mersey Rivers Trust in May 2017.

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Trustees' annual report
for the period ended 31 March 2023

The Trust applied to the Charity Commission to convert to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The main driver for this action was to reduce the administrative burden of reporting to both the Charity Commission and Companies House (as a Limited Company). The Mersey Rivers Trust Limited Company has been closed and "struck off" the Companies House register. The application to become a CIO was accepted and registered on 25 November 2021. The Trust worked with the Charity Commission to transfer the assets and business of the original Trust to the new CIO which was completed on 20 June 2022.

The Trust constituted itself as a "Foundation CIO" whose only voting members are its charity trustees. The trustees are members of the charity, but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

Appointment of Trustees

The first and current trustees were appointed (and may be removed) by its board of trustees. There should be one third of the trustees or two trustees, whichever is the greater, of those attending a meeting to be quorate.

The charitable objectives of the Trust are such that the trustees believe that it is essential to ensure that the management of the charity is effective and in line with good practice in the charitable sector. In addition, the areas of activity require experience, knowledge and expertise in river basin management, water resources, environmental management and protection, local government and the voluntary sector. The trustees annually review the membership of the trust to ensure an appropriate balance of management and more specialist expertise is available. New trustees are appointed following consideration by the existing trustees collectively. Trustees may serve for a maximum period of three years before standing down or seeking re-election. Each new Trustee undertakes an induction process based on Charity Commission guidance (CC3)

All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in note 8 to the accounts.

The Trustees delegate the day-to-day operation of the charity including its bank accounts to its two Executive Directors, Mr Paul Henbrey and Mr John Sanders. Governance and strategic direction to meet the objectives of the charity are led by the Trustees.

Related parties and relationships with other organisations

No trustee receives remuneration or other benefit for their work with the charity. Any contractual relationship with a related party must be disclosed: in the current or previous year, no such related party transactions were reported.

All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in note 8 to the accounts.

The charity does not have any subsidiaries. The Charity is a member of the national Rivers Trust movement, an umbrella organisation for local Rivers Trust in England, Wales and Ireland. The Rivers Trust campaigns on national issues and provides advice, guidance and support to local Trusts

Remuneration policy for key management personnel

Remuneration for key staff (Operations and Delivery Director and the Strategic Planning and Development Director) is aligned to the national Rivers Trust guidance "Pay Guide for Rivers Trusts October 2022"

Mersey Rivers Trust
Trustees' annual report
for the period ended 31 March 2023

The post of Director is designated as Grade 6 – “Director of a small to medium sized Trust”. The appointment of Paul Henbrey was made in November 2016 and John Sanders in July 2019. Remuneration will be reviewed annually by the Trustees.

Risk management

The monitoring and management of risk is a dynamic process, and the charity faces some level of risk in the activities, events and contracts that it engages in. The trustees have a risk management strategy which comprises:

- an annual review of the principal risks and uncertainties that the charity may face;
- the establishment of policies, systems and procedures to mitigate those risks identified in the annual review; and
- the implementation of procedures, designed to minimise or manage any potential impact the charity should those risks materialise.
 - Governance risks - eg inappropriate organisational structure, difficulties recruiting trustees with relevant skills, conflict of interest;
 - Financial risks - eg accuracy and timeliness of financial information, adequacy of reserves and cash flow, diversity of income sources;
 - External risks - eg public perception and adverse publicity, demographic changes, government policy;

Compliance with law and regulation - eg breach of trust law and regulatory requirements of particular activities such as fund-raising

The charity's review of its risk management will continue to help ensure:

- the charity's aims are achieved more effectively.
- significant risks are known and monitored enabling trustees to make a more effective contribution.
- there is improved forward planning.

Fundraising

The Trust does not carry out direct fundraising activities.

Funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others

The Trust does not hold funds or other assets on behalf of other individuals or organisations.

Statement of responsibilities of the trustees

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 charity's financial activities during the period and of its financial position at the end of the period. In preparing financial statements giving a true and fair view, the trustees should follow best practice and:

Mersey Rivers Trust
Trustees' annual report
for the period ended 31 March 2023

- 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 UK Accounting Standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation

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. 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.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The trustees' annual report has been approved by the trustees on 06/11/2023 and signed on their behalf by

Dr Keith Hendry
Mersey Rivers Trust Chair

Independent examiner's report
to the members of
Mersey Rivers Trust

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the period ended 31 March 2023 which are set out on pages 11 to 23.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees 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 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

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no 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; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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.

Jennifer Daniel FCCA DChA

Slade & Cooper Limited, Chartered Certified Accountants
Beehive Mill, Jersey Street
Manchester, M4 6JG

Date **09/11/2023**

Mersey Rivers Trust
Statement of Financial Activities
(including Income and Expenditure account)
for the period ended 31 March 2023

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
Income from:					
Charitable activities	3	337,597	342,729	680,326	936,130
Investments	4	2,727	-	2,727	532
Total income		340,324	342,729	683,053	936,662
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities:	5	230,601	424,642	655,243	1,130,897
Total expenditure		230,601	424,642	655,243	1,130,897
Net income/(expenditure) for the year	6	109,723	(81,913)	27,810	(194,235)
Transfer between funds		-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds for the year		109,723	(81,913)	27,810	(194,235)
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		221,761	134,671	356,432	550,667
Total funds carried forward		331,484	52,758	384,242	356,432

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Balance sheet as at 31 March 2023

	Note	2023		2022	
		£	£	£	£
Current assets					
Debtors	10	244,070		22,762	
Cash at bank and in hand		614,925		817,629	
Total current assets		858,995		840,391	
Liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due in less than one year	11	(474,753)		(483,959)	
Net current assets			384,242		356,432
Net assets			384,242		356,432
The funds of the charity:					
Restricted income funds	12		52,758		134,671
Unrestricted income funds	13		331,484		221,761
Total charity funds			384,242		356,432

The notes on pages 14 to 23 form part of these accounts.

Approved by the trustees on 06/11/2023 and signed on their behalf by:

Dr Keith Hendry (Chair)

Mersey Rivers Trust
Statement of Cash Flows
for the period ending 31 March 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	15	(205,431)	317,585
<i>Cash flows from investing activities:</i>			
Dividends, interest, and rents from investments		2,727	532
Cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		2,727	532
Increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the year		(202,704)	318,117
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		817,629	499,512
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		614,925	817,629

-

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the period ended 31 March 2023

1 Accounting policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgments and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

a Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), second edition - October 2019 (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared to give a 'true and fair view' and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), second edition - October 2019, rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

Mersey Rivers Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note.

b Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

The trustees have made no key judgments which have a significant effect on the accounts.

The trustees do not consider that there are any sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amount of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the period ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

c Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

For legacies, entitlement is taken as the earlier of the date on which either: the charity is aware that probate has been granted, the estate has been finalised and notification has been made by the executor(s) to the charity that a distribution will be made, or when a distribution is received from the estate. Receipt of a legacy, in whole or in part, is only considered probable when the amount can be measured reliably and the charity has been notified of the executor's intention to make a distribution. Where legacies have been notified to the charity, or the charity is aware of the granting of probate, and the criteria for income recognition have not been met, then the legacy is treated as a contingent asset and disclosed if material.

Income received in advance of a provision of a specified service is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

d Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the Bank.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the period ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

e Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of charity.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose.

Restricted funds are donations and partnership agreements which the funder has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity.

f Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Expenditure on charitable activities includes salary payments, payments to contractors and other administration costs undertaken to further the purposes of
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

h Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

i Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

j Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the period ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

k Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

l Pensions

Employees of the charity are entitled to join a defined contribution scheme. The charity's contribution is restricted to the contributions disclosed in note 8. There were no outstanding contributions at the year end.

2 Legal status of the charity

The charity is an unincorporated charity registered in England and Wales.

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2023 £
Catchment partnership	-	342,729	342,729
Invasive species removal and river restoration	337,597	-	337,597
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	337,597	342,729	680,326
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
<i>Previous reporting period</i>	<i>Unrestricted</i> £	<i>Restricted</i> £	<i>Total 2022</i> £
<i>Catchment partnership</i>	-	499,025	499,025
<i>Invasive species removal and river restoration</i>	437,105	-	437,105
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<i>Subtotal for activity 1</i>	<i>437,105</i>	<i>499,025</i>	<i>936,130</i>
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
4 Investment income		2,023 £	2,022 £
Income from bank deposits		2,727	532
		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

All of the charity's investment income arises from money held in interest bearing deposit accounts. All investment income is unrestricted.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the period ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

5 Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

	2023	2022
	£	£
Staff costs	335,399	503,866
Contractors expenses	231,942	456,519
Travel and subsistence	16,618	22,892
Stationery and telephone	2,512	1,226
Accountancy fees	3,778	4,990
Meetings	1,320	1,247
Equipment	26,231	36,740
Training	5,730	13,041
Insurance	6,242	2,510
IT costs	1,167	6,125
Administration	13,582	42,151
Miscellaneous	988	7,740
Charitable donations	100	15,401
Legal and professional fees	7,474	14,289
Governance costs		
Independent examiner's fee	2,160	2,160
	655,243	1,130,897
	655,243	1,130,897
	2023	2022
	£	£
Restricted expenditure	424,642	420,695
Unrestricted expenditure	230,601	710,202
	655,243	1,130,897
	655,243	1,130,897

6 Net income/(expenditure) for the year

	2023	2022
	£	£
This is stated after charging/(crediting):		
Independent examiner's fee	2,160	2,160
	2,160	2,160

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the period ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

7 Staff costs

Staff costs during the year were as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Wages and salaries	287,825	439,495
Social security costs	27,092	32,289
Pension costs	20,482	32,042
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	335,399	503,826
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

No employees has employee benefits in excess of £60,000 (2022: Nil).

The average number of staff employed during the period was 14 (2022: 13.53).

The average full time equivalent number of staff employed during the period was 12 (2022: 12.2).

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the trustees and the Executive Director Operations and Delivery and Executive Director Strategy Development. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £76,955 (2022: £101,006).

8 Trustee remuneration and expenses, and related party transactions

No (2022:nil) trustee received conference expenses during the year (2022:£nil).

Aggregate donations from related parties were £nil (2022: £nil).

There are no donations from related parties which are outside the normal course of business and no restricted donations from related parties.

No other trustee or other person related to the charity had any personal interest in any contract or transaction entered into by the charity, including guarantees, during the year (2022:nil).

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the period ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

9 Corporation tax

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within Chapter 3 of Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects. No tax charges have arisen in the charity.

10 Debtors

	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade debtors	243,486	19,300
Prepayments and accrued income	-	2,878
Other debtors	584	584
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	244,070	22,762
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

11 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Other creditors and accruals	7,522	8,931
Deferred income	458,832	465,780
Taxation and social security costs	8,399	9,248
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	474,753	483,959
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the period ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

12 Analysis of movements in restricted funds

Current reporting period	at 21 June 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Catchment partnership	134,671	342,729	(424,642)	-	52,758
Total	134,671	342,729	(424,642)	-	52,758
Previous reporting period	<i>Balance at 1 April 2021 £</i>	<i>Income £</i>	<i>Expenditure £</i>	<i>Transfers £</i>	<i>Balance at 20 June 2022 £</i>
Catchment partnership	56,341	499,025	(420,695)	-	134,671
Total	56,341	499,025	(420,695)	-	134,671

Name of restricted fund

Description, nature and purposes of the fund

Catchment partnership

The Catchment Partnerships and associated projects are part of the DEFRA led initiative Catchment Based Approach (CaBA). The Mersey Rivers Trust receives funding from DEFRA (via the Environment Agency) and the European funded Natural Course Project to host three Catchment Partnerships (Alt/Crossens, Lower Mersey and Upper Mersey Catchments). Funding is also received to deliver other environmental projects from the Environment Agency (Water Environment Improvement Fund (WEIF) and Natural Flood Management Fund and Water Environment Grants). Transfer to unrestricted funds represents expenditure that have not been correctly allocated to restricted funds and surpluses achieved through project efficiencies. The associated projects have been delivered satisfactorily and signed off by the funders.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the period ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

13 Analysis of movement in unrestricted funds

Current reporting period	at 21 June 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	As at 31 March 2023 £
General fund	221,761	340,324	(230,601)	-	331,484
	221,761	340,324	(230,601)	-	331,484
	221,761	340,324	(230,601)	-	331,484
Previous reporting period	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	As at 20 June 2022 £
General fund	494,326	437,637	(710,202)	-	221,761
	494,326	437,637	(710,202)	-	221,761
	494,326	437,637	(710,202)	-	221,761

Name of unrestricted fund	Description, nature and purposes of the fund
General fund	The free reserves after allowing for all designated funds

14 Analysis of net assets between funds

	General fund £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total £
Net current assets/(liabilities)	331,484	-	52,758	384,242
Total	331,484	-	52,758	384,242

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the period ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

15 Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities

	2023 £	2022 £
Net income/(expenditure) for the year	27,810	(194,235)
Adjustments for:		
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	(2,727)	(532)
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	(221,308)	42,914
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	(9,206)	469,438
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating	(205,431)	317,585
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

16 Transfer of assets and liabilities

The assets and liabilities of the unincorporated charity were transferred to a new charitable incorporated organisation on the 20 June 2022.

MERSEY RIVERS TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1196777

Accounts

Charity Number: 1073152

Mersey Rivers Trust

Report and financial statements
For the period ended 20 June 2022

Mersey Rivers Trust
Reference and administrative information
for the period ended 20 June 2022

Charity number 1073152

Registered office and operational address Riverview A17 Embankment Business Park Heaton
Mersey Stockport SK3 3GN

Trustees Trustees who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows:

Dr Keith Hendry	Chair
Professor Peter Batey	Trustee
Mr David Henry Crawshaw	Trustee
Mr Christopher Findley	Trustee
Mr Terence Clive Gaskell	Trustee
Mr Nicolas Carter	Trustee
Mrs Sarah Jenner	Trustee
Mr David Thompson	Trustee
Dr Stephen Boulton	Trustee
Mr Alex Clegg	Trustee (Appointed 09/03/22)
Ms Francesca Sullivan	Trustee (Appointed 09/03/22)

Key management	Name	Paul Henbrey	Operations and Delivery Director
personnel	Name	John Sanders	Strategic Planning and Development Director

Bankers	Name	Triodos
	Address	Deanery Road, Bristol, BS1 5A

Solicitors	Name	Slater Heelis
	Address	86 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 2ER DX 14310 Manchester 1

Independent	Jennifer Daniel FCCA, DChA Slade & Cooper Limited
Examiner	Beehive Mill, Jersey Street, Manchester, M4 6JG

Mersey Rivers Trust
Trustees' annual report
for the period ended 20 June 2022

The Mersey Rivers Trust (MRT) trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements for the year ended 20 June 2022.

Reference and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the charity's constitution and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: SORP applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102.

Objectives and activities

The charity was created in 1998 to work in Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Cheshire and Lancashire and has the following objectives:

- To promote, encourage and where applicable deliver projects for the preservation, restoration, and development of urban and rural waterways and their environs, including adjacent estuarine and coastal areas as defined in the area of benefit, for the benefit of the public environment and its wildlife.
- To advance education by raising public awareness of the issues relating to securing, improving and maintaining such urban and rural waterways and their environs.
- To promote the use of and access to waterways and waterside in the interests of social welfare for recreation and other leisure-time activities with the object of improving the conditions of life for the public

The trustees have reviewed the objectives of the Trust and agreed they are still valid.

Since September 2014, the charity became a Rivers Trust joining a national network of Rivers Trusts. The charity pays an annual fee and gains the support of the regional and national directors in carrying out Trust activities including employment of staff. Staff are entitled to a Rivers Trust pension scheme.

As in recent years the charity has focused on research into water quality and identification and implementation of improvement and engagement projects. It has also been a valuable forum for discussion between local authorities and water professionals. The charity has engaged with local communities as well as professional networks.

In June 2017 the Healthy Waterways Trust (operating under the name of the Healthy Rivers Trust) merged with the Mersey Basin Rivers Trust with a consequential change of name to the Mersey Rivers Trust. The charity will continue to operate as a member of the Rivers Trust and will benefit from a wider volunteer base and the utilisation of the skills and experience of its staff and Trustees. The Trust converted to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 20 June 2022.

The trustees review the aims, objectives, and activities of the charity each year. This report looks at what the charity has achieved and the outcomes of its work in the reporting period. The trustees report the success of each key activity and the benefits the charity has brought to those groups of people that it is set up to help. The review also helps the trustees ensure the charity's aims, objectives and activities remained focused on its stated purposes.

The trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning its future activities. In particular, the trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives that have been set.

Mersey Rivers Trust
Trustees' annual report
for the period ended 20 June 2022

Statement of Public Benefit

In meeting these objectives, the charity's public benefit aim is to maintain, complete and apply for funding that supports projects as detailed previously. The charity has met its objectives by sticking to the guidelines of the grants applied for.

In setting out policy and planning these activities the trustees have given consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

The Charities Act identifies thirteen charitable purposes as being for the public benefit. The Mersey Rivers Trust meets the public benefit principles by focusing on three of those charitable purposes:

- the advancement of environmental protection or improvement.
- the advancement of education.
- the advancement of health.

Achievements and performance

The charity's main activities and who it tries to help are described below. All its charitable activities focus on the rivers, waterbodies and their environs in the Mersey Catchment and are undertaken to further Frs102 charity's charitable purposes for the public benefit.

The impact of Covid 19 continued to restrict the activities of the Trust during the early part of the reporting period. The number of volunteer events were reduced, and numbers limited. Most staff continued to work from home however some staff returned to working from 'hosted' office space.

The Trust has continued to develop and grow to meet the extensive water quality issues in the Mersey Catchment and has a significant portfolio of approved and funded projects. To deliver the expanding portfolio of environmental improvement projects the Trust appointed an additional full time Project Manager in January 2021. In addition two members of staff left the Trust and were replaced on a like for like basis.

The Trust continued to host three "Catchment Based Approach" (CaBA) catchment partnerships funded by DEFRA via the Environment Agency (£15k per partnership). The hosting of partnership meetings was mainly carried out using video conferencing and webinars however some "live" meetings were introduced towards the end of the financial year. All three partnerships delivered the Environment Agency's "National Success Measures"

The Trust is delivering multiyear river-based improvement projects funded from donations via Enforcement Undertakings to in the Norbury and Micker Brook sub-catchments. Both projects involved working with partners and action groups to identify and deliver local actions such as river clean ups, tree planting and habitat improvements.

Working in partnership with other organisations has been a key feature of the work carried out in the Mersey Catchment. Projects such as the delivery of 60 farm management plans and farm interventions in the Upper Weaver with Severn Rivers Trust and United Utilities will help to reduce the risk of diffuse agricultural pollution. The successful completion of this project led to the award of further funding from the Environment Agency for similar work in the River Bollin catchment.

In partnership with and funded by Highways England the Trust worked with landowners to identify and deliver opportunities to reduce the risk of flooding along major road corridors in the Irwell and Etherow Catchments. MRT provided initial identification and engagement of landowners and farmers and agreed

Mersey Rivers Trust
Trustees' annual report
for the period ended 20 June 2022

interventions which were then wholly or partly funded by the Trust using advanced fund supplied by Highways England.

The Trust focussed on three river systems River Tame, River Irk and the River Bollin, activities included working with schools and colleges in socially deprived areas to educate and raise awareness of local rivers, control of invasive species and working with volunteers and action groups to clean up rivers through local litter picks along riverbanks.

Several bids to the UK Governments Green Recovery programme were submitted and funding awarded for work on the Rivers Tame and River Bollin. In addition funding was also received to run a trainee project aimed at young people aged between 18-25 resulting in the appointment of a trainee for a period of one year. The trainee has benefitted from significant training and work experience which will prepare them to seek full time employment.

The Trust has tried to maintain contact with our volunteer base and local communities with regular newsletters, updates on our website and social media. The impact of Covid with a focus on engagement and encouraging volunteer work on local rivers.

Beneficiaries of our services

The Trust aims to improve the aquatic environment in the Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Merseyside areas for the benefit of local communities, anglers, environmental action groups and other organisations with similar objectives. Improvements to the environment will benefit the public through cleaner and healthier looking rivers with improved access, education and awareness through public events and volunteer activities.

Financial review

The Trust continues to be run on a sound and improving financial basis resulting from significant donations and grants to deliver environmental projects.

The total income received was £936,662 (£535,239: 2021) and expenditure of £1,130,897 (£547,037: 2021). The net income/expenditure of -£197,235 resulted from the delivery of projects where funding had been received in previous years and expenditure for work done on 2022/23 'in year' projects where funding will be paid retrospectively in April 2023.

The significant increase in income is largely due to advanced funding of projects which will be delivered over the next two years and the extended accounting period because of the switch to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. However, the Trust has been successful in winning an increased number of funding bids to deliver a range of diverse projects.

The key expenditure areas associated with charitable activities such as partnership hosting and project delivery. Staff costs increased significantly to £503,866 (£310,998:2021) due to the appointment of additional staff including a new Project Manager and trainee, rising employment costs and the extended accounting period.

The Trust is almost wholly funded by grants and awards to complete environmental projects and Initiatives. The principal source of funding is the Environment Agency through its Water and Environment Improvement Fund, Natural Flood Management Fund, Water Environment Grant and Catchment Based Approach. However, the Trust has actively tried to find alternative funding sources to reduce the reliance on Environment Agency funding. The funding is used to deliver projects using Mersey Rivers Trust staff (staff costs recovery) and the use of contractors and consultants (project management). A small number of directly contracted works were carried out on behalf of our partners.

Mersey Rivers Trust
Trustees' annual report
for the period ended 20 June 2022

The Trust's unrestricted funds have decreased to £221,761 (£494,326: 2021) reflecting the expenditure on projects targeted by the Trust funded in advance in previous years by donations. The Trust has also identified additional projects which it will fund from unrestricted funds to be delivered in 2022/23.

Reserves policy

Reserves are considered to be that part of the Trust's funds which are freely available for its general purpose after it has met its commitments and covered its other planned expenditure. These unrestricted funds are needed to bridge the gap between the spending and receiving of income and to cover administrative, fundraising and support costs without which the Trust could not function. The trustees consider that due to the expansion and future growth plans for the Trust the ideal level of reserves as at 31st March 2021 would be in the region of £220,000 being 6 months (or 50%) of future annual base operating costs (2022/23) for salaries, insurance, accounting, governance and general admin.

The unrestricted "General Fund" of 221,761 includes MRT planned funding (£56,491) to deliver MRT identified projects. The balance of the General Fund of £165,270 will be regarded as 'MRT Reserves'. Reserves have increased by £11,665 from 2021/22 primarily as a result of donations and the efficiencies made on project delivery

The reserves stand at 38% of base annual operating costs, lower than the stated policy figure. This will be offset in future years by increased fund raising and project efficiencies.

Plans for the future

We will continue to deliver our short-term plans which are aligned to our long-term objectives (2050 given the scale of the challenges faced in the Mersey Basin).

The 2050 outcomes will guide the shorter-term strategy for the growth and development of the Trust over the next three years. Allied to the longer-term outcomes, we have developed the following key priorities for the period 2020 to 2023:

- Continue to build robust survey evidence and deliver appropriate measures for river habitat and water quality enhancement in our priority catchments covering:
 - River Irk catchment
 - River Bollin catchment
 - River Alt catchment
 - Norbury Brook (including Micker Brook and Ladybrook) sub-catchment of the Upper Mersey
 - Rivacre Brook catchment (Wirral)
 - "Speke to Spike" northern waterfront of the Mersey Estuary (from the Speke-Garston coastal reserve upstream to Spike Island near Widnes)
- Additionally, we will continue to grow our activities in the Weaver/Gowy and Alt/Crossens catchments which have had a lesser focus historically:
 - Continue to work with EA and Natural England on the Alt/Crossens engagement activities with local farming communities
 - Farm advice and support of interventions to reduce agricultural impact on receiving watercourses in the Bollin and Weaver catchments.
- The basin-wide footprint of the Trust is a key benefit so we can take a holistic approach. We will therefore seek to maintain the balance between activities in the upper Mersey basin (i.e. Greater Manchester) and the lower Mersey basin (i.e. Cheshire and Merseyside).
- Deliver natural flood management solutions targeted in dialogue with flood risk authorities to those communities that will benefit most from these solutions.

Mersey Rivers Trust
Trustees' annual report
for the period ended 20 June 2022

- Expand our education and engagement with local communities in our target catchments, increasing our River Guardian volunteers, volunteer inputs and encouraging local ownership ("Friends" groups).
- Deliver the Trust's fisheries strategy during 2021 to 2025 including agreed priority actions, such as targeted monitoring, addressing migration barriers, physical habitat improvements and improving our engagement with the angling community.
- Develop an access and recreation strategy for the rivers systems in the Mersey catchment.
- Improve access and aesthetic quality of the water environment in our priority catchments to encourage more people to gain benefits from their local waterways. This will particularly involve working with our volunteers and "Friends Groups" (including BEACON) with litter clean-ups and carrying out small-scale works to improve access to waterways and enhance biodiversity and river habitat.
- Enhance and expand our relationships with key delivery partners - principally other Third Sector organisations - to support future funding bids.
- Strengthen our links to academic institutions in the Mersey Basin to identify opportunities for collaboration and encourage research into innovative solutions to the challenges we face in the catchment
- The Trust will also review its operating structure to ensure a fit for purpose organisation designed to meet the significant water quality issue in the Mersey catchment.

Structure, governance and management

Healthy Waterways Trust is constituted by Trust Deed dated 6 October 1998 and deed of variation dated 1st July 1999 and is a registered charity No. 01073152. The Trust was renamed The Mersey Rivers Trust in May 2017.

The Trust has applied to the Charity Commission to convert to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The main driver for this action was to reduce the administrative burden of reporting to the Charity Commission and Companies (as a Limited Company). The Mersey Rivers Trust Limited company will be closed and "struck off" the Companies House register. The application to become a CIO was accepted and registered on 25 November 2021. The Trust has been working with the Charity commission to transfer the assets and business of the original Trust to the new CIO which was completed on 20 June 2022.

The trust constituted itself as a "Foundation CIO" whose only voting members are its charity trustees. The trustees are members of the charity, but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

Appointment of Trustees

The first and current trustees were appointed (and may be removed) by its board of trustees. There should be one third of the trustees or two trustees, whichever is the greater, of those attending a meeting to be quorate.

The charitable objectives of the trust are such that the trustees believe that it is essential to ensure that the management of the charity is effective and in line with good practice in the charitable sector. In addition, the areas of activity require experience, knowledge and expertise in river basin management, water resources, environmental management and protection, local government and the voluntary sector. The trustees annually review the membership of the trust to ensure an appropriate balance of management and more specialist expertise is available. New trustees are appointed following consideration by the existing trustees collectively. Trustees may serve for a maximum period of three years before standing down or seeking re-election.

Mersey Rivers Trust
Trustees' annual report
for the period ended 20 June 2022

All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in note 8 to the accounts.

Related parties and relationships with other organisations

None of the trustees receive remuneration or other benefit for their work with the charity. Any contractual relationship with a related party must be disclosed: in the current or previous year, no such related party transactions were reported

Remuneration policy for key management personnel

Remuneration for key staff (Operations and Delivery Director and the Strategic Planning and Development Director) is aligned to the National Rivers Trust guidance "Pay Guide for Rivers Trust October 2021"

The post of Director is designated as Grade 6 – "Director of a small to medium sized Trust". The appointment of the Director (Paul Henbrey was made in November 2016 and John Sanders July 2019). Remuneration will be reviewed annually by the Trustees.

Risk management

The monitoring and management of risk is a dynamic process, and the charity faces some level of risk in the activities, events and contracts that it engages in. The trustees have a risk management strategy which comprises:

- an annual review of the principal risks and uncertainties that the charity may face;
- the establishment of policies, systems and procedures to mitigate those risks identified in the annual review; and
- the implementation of procedures, designed to minimise or manage any potential impact the charity should those risks materialise.
 - Governance risks - eg inappropriate organisational structure, difficulties recruiting trustees with relevant skills, conflict of interest;
 - Financial risks - eg accuracy and timeliness of financial information, adequacy of reserves and cash flow, diversity of income sources;
 - External risks - eg public perception and adverse publicity, demographic changes, government policy;

Compliance with law and regulation - eg breach of trust law and regulatory requirements of particular activities such as fund-raising

The charity's review of its risk management will continue to help ensure:

- the charity's aims are achieved more effectively;
- significant risks are known and monitored enabling trustees to make a more effective contribution;
- there is improved forward planning

Mersey Rivers Trust
Trustees' annual report
for the period ended 20 June 2022

Fundraising

The Trust does not carry out direct fundraising activities.

Funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others

The Trust does not hold funds or other assets on behalf of other individuals or organisations.

Mersey Rivers Trust
Trustees' annual report
for the period ended 20 June 2022

Statement of responsibilities of the trustees

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 charity's financial activities during the period and of its financial position at the end of the period. In preparing financial statements giving a true and fair view, the trustees should follow best practice and:

- 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 UK Accounting Standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation

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. 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.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The trustees' annual report has been approved by the trustees on 18/01/2023 and signed on their behalf by

Name Dr Keith Hendry

Title Mersey Rivers Trust Chair

Independent examiner's report
to the members of
Mersey Rivers Trust

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the period ended 20 June 2022 which are set out on pages 11 to 23.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees 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 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

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no 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; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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.

Jennifer Daniel FCCA DChA

Slade & Cooper Limited, Chartered Certified Accountants
Beehive Mill, Jersey Street
Manchester, M4 6JG

Date 22/03/2023

Mersey Rivers Trust
Statement of Financial Activities
(including Income and Expenditure account)
for the period ended 20 June 2022

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds 2022 £	Total funds 2021 £
Income from:					
Charitable activities	3	437,105	499,025	936,130	534,475
Investments	4	532	-	532	764
Total income		437,637	499,025	936,662	535,239
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities:	5	710,202	420,695	1,130,897	547,037
Total expenditure		710,202	420,695	1,130,897	547,037
Net income/(expenditure) for the year	6	(272,565)	78,330	(194,235)	(11,798)
Transfer between funds		-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds for the year		(272,565)	78,330	(194,235)	(11,798)
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		494,326	56,341	550,667	562,465
Total funds carried forward		221,761	134,671	356,432	550,667

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Balance sheet as at 20 June 2022

	Note	2022		2021	
		£	£	£	£
Current assets					
Debtors	10	22,762		65,676	
Cash at bank and in hand		817,629		499,512	
Total current assets		840,391		565,188	
Liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due in less than one year	11	(483,959)		(14,521)	
Net current assets			356,432		550,667
Net assets			356,432		550,667
The funds of the charity:					
Restricted income funds	12		134,671		56,341
Unrestricted income funds	13		221,761		494,326
Total charity funds			356,432		550,667

The notes on pages 14 to 23 form part of these accounts.

Approved by the trustees on 18/01/2023 and signed on their behalf by:

Dr Keith Hendry (Chair)

Mersey Rivers Trust
Statement of Cash Flows
for the period ending 20 June 2022

	Note	2022 £	2021 £
Cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	15	317,585	(55,356)
<i>Cash flows from investing activities:</i>			
Dividends, interest, and rents from investments		532	764
Cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		532	764
Increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the year		318,117	(54,592)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		499,512	554,104
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		817,629	499,512

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Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the period ended 20 June 2022

1 Accounting policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgments and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

a Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), second edition - October 2019 (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared to give a 'true and fair view' and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), second edition - October 2019, rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

Mersey Rivers Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note.

b Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

The trustees have made no key judgments which have a significant effect on the accounts.

The trustees do not consider that there are any sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amount of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the period ended 20 June 2022 (continued)

c Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

For legacies, entitlement is taken as the earlier of the date on which either: the charity is aware that probate has been granted, the estate has been finalised and notification has been made by the executor(s) to the charity that a distribution will be made, or when a distribution is received from the estate. Receipt of a legacy, in whole or in part, is only considered probable when the amount can be measured reliably and the charity has been notified of the executor's intention to make a distribution. Where legacies have been notified to the charity, or the charity is aware of the granting of probate, and the criteria for income recognition have not been met, then the legacy is treated as a contingent asset and disclosed if material.

Income received in advance of a provision of a specified service is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

d Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the Bank.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the period ended 20 June 2022 (continued)

e Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of charity.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose.

Restricted funds are donations and partnership agreements which the funder has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity.

f Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Expenditure on charitable activities includes salary payments, payments to contractors and other administration costs undertaken to further the purposes of
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

h Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

i Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

j Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the period ended 20 June 2022 (continued)

k Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

l Pensions

Employees of the charity are entitled to join a defined contribution scheme. The charity's contribution is restricted to the contributions disclosed in note 8. There were no outstanding contributions at the year end.

2 Legal status of the charity

The charity is an unincorporated charity registered in England and Wales.

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2022 £
Catchment partnership	-	499,025	499,025
Invasive species removal and river restoration	437,105	-	437,105
Total	437,105	499,025	936,130

<i>Previous reporting period</i>	<i>Unrestricted</i> £	<i>Restricted</i> £	<i>Total 2021</i> £
<i>Catchment partnership</i>	-	368,250	368,250
<i>Invasive species removal and river restoration</i>	166,225	-	166,225
<i>Subtotal for activity 1</i>	<i>166,225</i>	<i>368,250</i>	<i>534,475</i>

4 Investment income

	2,022 £	2,021 £
Income from bank deposits	532	764

All of the charity's investment income arises from money held in interest bearing deposit accounts. All investment income is unrestricted.

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the period ended 20 June 2022 (continued)

5 Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

	2022	2021
	£	£
Staff costs	503,866	310,998
Contractors expenses	456,519	167,250
Travel and subsistence	22,892	11,116
Stationery and telephone	1,226	966
Accountancy fees	4,990	4,484
Meetings	1,247	46
Equipment	36,740	25,301
Training	13,041	2,626
Insurance	2,510	1,830
IT costs	6,125	1,387
Administration	42,151	10,270
Miscellaneous	7,740	8,963
Charitable donations	15,401	-
Legal and professional fees	14,289	-
Governance costs		
Independent examiner's fee	2,160	1,800
	1,130,897	547,037
	1,130,897	547,037
	2022	2021
	£	£
Restricted expenditure	420,695	316,310
Unrestricted expenditure	710,202	230,727
	1,130,897	547,037
	1,130,897	547,037

6 Net income/(expenditure) for the year

This is stated after charging/(crediting):	2022	2021
	£	£
Independent examiner's fee	2,160	1,800
	2,160	1,800
	2,160	1,800

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the period ended 20 June 2022 (continued)

7 Staff costs

Staff costs during the year were as follows:

	2022 £	2021 £
Wages and salaries	439,495	307,403
Social security costs	32,289	29,252
Pension costs	32,042	22,081
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	503,826	358,736
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

No employees has employee benefits in excess of £60,000 (2021: Nil).

The average number of staff employed during the period was 13.53 (2021: 10.75).

The average full time equivalent number of staff employed during the period was 12.2 (2021: 10.2).

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the trustees and the Executive Director Operations and Delivery and Executive Director Strategy Development. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £101,006 (2021: £76,705).

8 Trustee remuneration and expenses, and related party transactions

No (2021:One) trustee received conference expenses during the year (2021:£262).

Aggregate donations from related parties were £nil (2021: £nil).

There are no donations from related parties which are outside the normal course of business and no restricted donations from related parties.

No other trustee or other person related to the charity had any personal interest in any contract or transaction entered into by the charity, including guarantees, during the year (2021:nil).

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the period ended 20 June 2022 (continued)

9 Corporation tax

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within Chapter 3 of Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects. No tax charges have arisen in the charity.

10 Debtors

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade debtors	19,300	62,313
Prepayments and accrued income	2,878	2,780
Other debtors	584	583
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	22,762	65,676
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

11 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2022 £	2021 £
Other creditors and accruals	8,931	6,046
Deferred income	465,780	-
Taxation and social security costs	9,248	8,475
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	483,959	14,521
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the period ended 20 June 2022 (continued)

12 Analysis of movements in restricted funds

Current reporting period	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 20 June 2022 £
Catchment partnership	56,341	499,025	(420,695)	-	134,671
Total	56,341	499,025	(420,695)	-	134,671
Previous reporting period	<i>Balance at 1 April 2020</i> £	<i>Income</i> £	<i>Expenditure</i> £	<i>Transfers</i> £	<i>Balance at 31 March 2021</i> £
Catchment partnership	4,401	368,250	(316,310)	-	56,341
Total	4,401	368,250	(316,310)	-	56,341

Name of restricted fund

Description, nature and purposes of the fund

Catchment partnership

The Catchment Partnerships and associated projects are part of the DEFRA led initiative Catchment Based Approach (CaBA). The Mersey Rivers Trust receives funding from DEFRA (via the Environment Agency) and the European funded Natural Course Project to host three Catchment Partnerships (Alt/Crossens, Lower Mersey and Upper Mersey Catchments). Funding is also received to deliver other environmental projects from the Environment Agency (Water Environment Improvement Fund (WEIF) and Natural Flood Management Fund and Water Environment Grants). Transfer to unrestricted funds represents expenditure that have not been correctly allocated to restricted funds and surpluses achieved through project efficiencies. The associated projects have been delivered satisfactorily and signed off by the funders

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the period ended 20 June 2022 (continued)

13 Analysis of movement in unrestricted funds

Current reporting period	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	As at 20 June 2022 £
General fund	494,326	437,637	(710,202)	-	221,761
	<u>494,326</u>	<u>437,637</u>	<u>(710,202)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>221,761</u>
Previous reporting period	Balance at 1 April 2020 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	As at 31 March 2021 £
General fund	558,064	166,989	(230,727)	-	494,326
	<u>558,064</u>	<u>166,989</u>	<u>(230,727)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>494,326</u>

Name of unrestricted fund	Description, nature and purposes of the fund
General fund	The free reserves after allowing for all designated funds

14 Analysis of net assets between funds

	General fund £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total £
Net current assets/(liabilities)	221,761	-	134,671	356,432
Total	<u>221,761</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>134,671</u>	<u>356,432</u>

Mersey Rivers Trust

Notes to the accounts for the period ended 20 June 2022 (continued)

15 Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities

	2022 £	2021 £
Net income/(expenditure) for the year	(194,235)	(11,798)
Adjustments for:		
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	(532)	(764)
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	42,914	(45,787)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	469,438	2,993
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating	317,585	(55,356)
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

16 Transfer of assets and liabilities

The assets and liabilities of the unincorporated charity were transferred to a new charitable incorporated organisation on the 20 June 2022.