



NATIONAL TRAILS UK

REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1196805

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TRUSTEES REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements for the period ended 31 March 2023. They are satisfied that the financial statements comply with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011, the trust Deed as described below and the recommendations of the 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).

Chair's Introduction

National Trail designation goes back to the creation of the UK's 'Natural Health Service' through the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949. Seventy-five years ago, National Trails were envisioned as the ways to and through our finest landscapes. The positive impact National Trails have to our health and wellbeing is just as important today. We now also know far more about the value of the National Trails in supporting sustainable local economies and the potential trail corridors have for nature recovery.

The National Trails have worked together informally for years. Following threats to grant funding, the Chairs of the Trail Partnerships and lead National Trail Officers recognised the need for the 20 UK National Trails to work together on a more formal basis to secure support for their maintenance and enhancement.

National Trails UK was established to give a stronger voice for National Trails across the UK and to amplify their remarkable public benefit. This first Annual Report sets out the work undertaken by the charity from its registration on 26th November 2021 through to 31 March 2023.

It is not possible to acknowledge all the National Trail Partnership Chairs, National Trail Officers and others in the wider trails family who helped champion and establish National Trails UK. However, a few people need a special mention. Firstly, Ian Richie, The Ridgeway, helped to coordinate discussions on securing funding from Government. In 2018 Alan Hulme at the Yorkshire Dales National Park secured a Heritage Lottery Fund Resilience Grant to help define what a stronger voice for National Trails meant in terms of priorities and to recommend a governance model. The result of this work was the Red Kite Report: *On the right path: Options for a body to aid future management of the National Trails*.

In 2019 a MOU was signed between all the English and Welsh National Trails articulating a joint ambition to establish a charitable incorporated organisation. A National Trails Alliance Working Group was established to take forward this work comprising Hilary Cox (Norfolk Coast Path and Peddars Way), Andy Gattiker (South Downs Way), Steve Good (Thames Path), Michael Graham (Cleveland Way), Simon Kearey (The Ridgeway), Juliet Michael (Natural Resources Wales), Patrick Wharam (Yorkshire Wolds Way), and myself (South West Coast Path).

Ken Carter, Chair, South West Coast Path (SWCP) Trail Partnership secured support for the work of the alliance through the SWCP Association. This support included giving my time towards the project and employing a Development Manager, Jo Atkey to help set up the charity. In October 2021 the Plymouth Accord was agreed in a meeting of all the National Trails and an application to register the charity was submitted to the Charity Commission.

Once registered, the founding Trustees worked quickly to recruit a new Board with a broad set of skills and experiences, ensuring that the new charity would be fit for purpose. A new CEO, Polly Martin, was recruited and took up post in January 2023.

Thank you to all the above and everyone else across the Trails family, wider protected landscapes and government who helped create and steer National Trails UK. Now that we are established, the real work begins.

Julian Gray
Chair, National Trails UK



Objects and Aims

National Trails UK is the independent champion of the UK's designated National Trails, an inspirational network of long-distance routes that provides a gateway to the UK's spectacular landscapes, amazing wildlife and unique heritage. We strengthen, advocate and inspire on behalf of National Trails, so everyone can connect to nature and experience the great outdoors.

The charities objectives are to:

- (1) promote and protect the health and well-being of the public by securing the protection, improvement and conservation of the various National Trails in the United Kingdom ("the National Trails"), in particular but not exclusively by promoting public access to the National Trails and encouraging people to walk, ride and take exercise using the National Trails and to access and enjoy the landscapes through which they pass;
- (2) advance the education of the public in relation to the National Trails, their history and heritage, the communities linked with them and the physical and natural environments in which they are situated, in particular but not exclusively by the provision of arts and heritage engagement activities; and
- (3) promote for the benefit of the public, and to advance the education of the public in, the conservation protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment where this relates to the network of National Trails and the landscapes through which they run.

National Trails UK delivers its charitable objects through advocacy, liaising with government and working with relevant departments on long-term policy and strategy for the National Trails. The charity raises funds in support of its objectives, enabling information exchange and learning opportunities for members and will market and promote the National Trails for the benefit of all.

Public Benefit Statement

The work of National Trails UK helps ensure that our National Trails are highly valued, and used, by everyone. To achieve this we strengthen the UK's National Trails so they can sustainably deliver more for people and nature, advocate on their behalf, and inspire more people to use them as a gateway to the great outdoors.

Our work provides public benefits by:

- supporting investment in the Trails network to improve accessibility and enjoyment.
- promoting the health and wellbeing benefits of using the trails and being outdoors.
- encouraging recognition of the benefits of Trail corridor for nature recovery.

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the requirements of section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

Achievements and performance

National Trails UK was registered as a Charity on 26th November 2021. Members of the working group established to set up the Charity became the founding Trustees at this point. Initial work focussed on setting up and adopting a sound administration and governance to run the charity. Finance Policies and procedures were adopted, and a bank account established. A Finance Committee was established, chaired by Simon Kearey. IT systems were established and associated policies established. The charity registered with the Fundraising Regulator.

The first external facing task was to recruit new Trustees in advance of the first AGM to be held in March 2022. A national recruitment campaign was launched. Six new Trustees were recruited and voted on at the AGM. In addition, three of the original Trustees were renominated and elected at the AGM. With nine Trustees elected, two spaces were kept clear for future recruitment to help ensure a broader diversity of voices were represented at the Board. The March 2022 AGM was held virtually and included a welcome statement by Marian Spain, CEO Natural England.

Securing sustainable funding to establish the charity was the next key priority. Following negotiations, a Defra grant was attained to help develop the charity with match funding from membership fees and the South West Coast Path Association.

To help ensure a strong voice for the National Trails, monthly meetings with Natural England and Natural Resources Wales National Trail teams were established. Discussions ranged from the development of the charity to policy issues impacting National Trails. Likewise, updates were given to the English and Welsh National Trail Officers meetings and discussions were held with NatureScot and Scottish National Trails.

An Advisory Council to support the Board with representation from all UK National Trails, chaired by Andrew Gattiker. A Coast Path Forum was also established, reporting to the Advisory Council and chaired by Patrick Wharam. Both meetings were set on a quarterly cycle. The Forum set up a working group to develop a report on Safety Management for UK Coastal Trails.

National Trails UK joined an established regular discussion hosted by Defra with National England (NE), National Parks England (NPE), National Park Partnerships and National Association of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB - now National Landscapes Association). The negotiations led to the establishment of the Protected Landscapes Partnership of which NTUK is a member. The aim of the Partnership is to deliver nature recovery and better equity of access across the protected landscapes by working better together and innovating in delivery and finance. NTUK was invited to join an Agreement between NE, NPE and NAAONB which commits to deliver national designated landscape priorities.

Branding work was started, to help define the personality, tone, voice and visual impact of the charity. The domain nationaltrails.uk was established as part of the brand supported by [twitter](https://twitter.com/nationaltrailsuk) (now X) and [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/nationaltrailsuk) accounts. Presentations on the establishment and development of the charity and work of UK National Trails were delivered at the Outdoor Recreation Network and World Trails Conference.

A successful national recruitment campaign was held and Polly Martin was appointed CEO in December 2022. Recruitment of an Impact Fundraiser and Research & Policy Officer followed.

Financial Review

The net expense for the period is £164,892. Further details are shown in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 7.

The charity has restricted funds at 31 March 2023 of £160,000 and unrestricted funds of £4892

Reserves policy

The Trustees actively monitor the charity's free reserves and continue to focus on increasing the level of these reserves whenever circumstances allow. Our Reserves Policy is set at six month's of operating costs and this was met as 31st March 2023.

Risk management

The Trustees have identified any major risks facing the charity and taken such steps as they can to mitigate them. The principal risks, based on likelihood and impact, faced by the Charity over the reporting period were:

- Securing a diverse, sustainable funding for the new charity.
- Recruiting a diverse and skilled Board to lead the charity.
- Wider political and economic instability impacting the charity's establishment.

Trustees manage these risks by recording them in a Register and defining a set of activities to reduce, manage or mitigate the risk were it to be realised. Trustees regularly review these activities to ensure the Charity is appropriately prepared.

Other risks identified in the risk register include:

- Lack of capacity to manage the charity in advance of a team being recruited.
- Insufficient governance / leadership at Trustee level.
- Development of a UK-wide charity with establishment funding from Defra.

The Trustees are satisfied that National Trails UK remains a going concern.

TRUSTEES REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Plans for the future

National Trails UK developed a Business Plan to drive its work over the establishment of the charity. The charity has developed a strategy with a clear mission and vision on how it can give a stronger voice for National Trails, including:

- Advocate for more secure funding for maintenance of the National Trails.
- Call for new funding for the establishment of the England Coast Path, Coast to Coast Path, and completion of the Pennine Bridleway National Trails.
- Collect evidence of the public benefits of the trail network.
- Champion the creation of a Coastal Wildbelt to improve access and nature along and around the England Coast Path.
- Fundraise to improve the trails network.
- Promote the trails network.
- Share knowledge and understanding across the trails network through the Advisory Council and National Trail Officers.
- Increase coordination of coastal National Trail management and promotion through the Coast Path Forum.
- Work with the Protected Landscapes Partnership to increase the impact and scale of the public benefits of National Trails.

Structure, Governance and Management

National Trails UK is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) governed by its Constitution approved on 26th November 2021. It is registered as a Charity with the Charity Commission.

Related Parties

None of the Trustees receive remuneration or other benefit from their work with the Charity. Trustees are required to complete an annual Declaration of Interests as well as to state any conflicts of interest before the start of each Board meeting. Trustees are also required to pass the HMRC “fit and proper” test as the Charity makes claims for tax relief.

National Trails UK works in partnership with a number of organisations to deliver its charitable objectives.

- The South West Coast Path Association worked with National Trails Partnerships and lead officers through a working group to establish National Trails UK.
- National Trails UK is a member of the Protected Landscapes Partnership with National Parks England, National Landscapes Association and Natural England. This partnership has been established to improve working across the protected landscapes family in England.
- National Trails UK is a member of the World Trails Network.

Organisation

The Board of Trustees hold monthly formal meetings virtually or in person. The Board has established and monitors the overall governance of the Charity and determines membership, terms of reference and procedures of committees and other groups. It receives reports and recommendations from its committees for ratification. All Trustees have access to the minutes of committees allowing scrutiny of their discussions and

activities. A Finance Committee was established, chaired by the Treasurer and reporting back to the Board. The Board has the power to create working groups to perform specific tasks over a limited timescale.

The following decisions are reserved to the Board of Trustees: to consider any proposals for changes to the status or constitution of the Charity and its committee structure, to appoint or remove the Chair and/or Vice Chair, to approve the budget, to approve changes to membership subscription rates. The Trustees are responsible for setting general policy, adopting a Business Plan and budget, approving the statutory accounts, monitoring Charity performance with the use of budgets and other data, evaluating and mitigating risks, and making major decisions about the direction of the Charity, capital expenditure and resources.

A suit of policies and procedures were developed and adopted over the reporting period to ensure sound governance of the charity including: conflicts of interest; data protection; disciplinary; ethical fundraising; equality, diversity & inclusion; flexible working; grievance; IT Security; leave; performance management; privacy; risk management; scheme of delegation; sickness absence; sustainability; Trustee code of conduct; and whistleblowing. A staff handbook and further HR policies and procedures were drafted.

The Board of Trustees are supported by an Advisory Council which has representation from all UK National Trails. A Coast Path Forum has been established to support emerging National Trail Partnerships along the England Coast Path and to coordinate a strategic approach for the management and promotion of coastal National Trails.

A Development Manager was recruited to help establish the charity up to September 2022. The charity's first CEO was subsequently recruited in December 2022 to drive forward our work. Recruitment for a fundraiser and Policy and Research Officer started in 2023. Other team members will be recruited to deliver specific work programmes of charity and wider Protected Landscapes Partnership.

Appointment of Trustees

The management of the charity is the responsibility of the Trustees who are elected and co-opted under the terms of the Constitution. One third of the Trustees retire or seek re-nomination each year at the AGM, based on the length of service. Trustees serve a three-year term and can serve for a maximum of three terms. Members elect new and renominated Trustees at the AGM. The procedure governing this process is set out in the Constitution and Rules.

Officers (Chair, Vice Chair, Hon Secretary and Treasurer) are elected by the Trustees at the first meeting of the Board of Trustees following AGM.

A maximum of eleven Trustees are permitted under the current Constitution. Trustees may co-opt additional Trustees between AGMs, so long as the total does not exceed eleven. A Trustee recruitment working group reviewed the Trustees diversity and skills matrix and advised on skills gaps within the Board.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

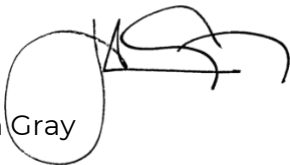
Trustees	Jeremy Clark Andrew Gattiker (Secretary) Stephen Good Michael Graham Julian Gray (Chair) Paul Hamblin Simon Kearey (Treasurer) Shane Logan Juliet Michael Sue Morgan Taryn Nixon Katy Owen Ben Twomey Andrew Wang Patrick Wharam	appointed March 2022 appointed December 2021 resigned March 2022 resigned March 2022 appointed December 2021 appointed March 2022 appointed December 2021 appointed March 2022 resigned March 2022 appointed September 2023 appointed March 2022 appointed March 2022 appointed March 2022 appointed September 2023 resigned March 2022
Charity number	1196805	
Principal office	Unit 11, Residence 2, Royal William Yard, Plymouth PL1 3RP	
Senior management	Polly Martin, CEO	
Independent examiner	PKF Francis Clark Sigma House Oak View Close Torquay Devon TQ2 7FF	
Banker	The co-operative bank P.O. Box 250 Skelmersdale WN8 6WT	

TRUSTEES REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**Trustees' Responsibilities**

The charity Trustees are responsible for preparing a Trustees' annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are required to:-

- 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 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 business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations and the provisions of the Trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.



Julian Gray

for and on behalf of the Trustees

Date: 01/05/2024

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES

Period Ended 31 MARCH 2023

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of National Trails UK for the period ended 31 March 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity 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 Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust 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.

.....
[Name and address of Independent Examiner t.b.c.]

Date:

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (SOFA)

Period Ended 31 March 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £
Income				
Charitable activities	- Grants 2	62,571	160,000	222,571
	- Fees & other income 3	<u>6,429</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,429</u>
Total		69,000	-	229,000
Expenditure				
Charitable activities	4	<u>59,770</u>	<u>4,338</u>	<u>64,108</u>
Net profit / (loss) and net movements in funds before transfers		9,230	155,662	164,892
Transfers between funds		<u>(4,338)</u>	<u>4,338</u>	<u>-</u>
Profit / (Loss) for period		<u>4,892</u>	<u>160,000</u>	<u>164,892</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure is derived from continuing activities.

BALANCE SHEET

As at 31 March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £
Tangible assets				
Fixed Assets	6	1,562	-	1,562
Current assets				
Other Debtors	7	1,268	160,000	161,268
Cash in hand / Bank	8	<u>4,662</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,662</u>
Total Assets held		7,492	160,000	167,492
Current liabilities				
Creditor due within one year	9	(2,600)	-	(2,600)
Long term liabilities				
Creditors due after one year		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net assets		<u>4,892</u>	<u>160,000</u>	<u>164,892</u>
Capital and reserves				
Retained earnings		-	-	-
Current year profit / (loss)		<u>4,892</u>	<u>160,000</u>	<u>164,892</u>
Total capital and reserves	10,11	<u>4,892</u>	<u>160,000</u>	<u>164,892</u>

Approved by the Board of Trustees on and signed on its behalf by:

.....

Julian Gray

NOTES FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Period Ended 31 March 2023

1. Accounting Policies

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

a. General information

Reference and administrative details of the charity can be found on page 5.

b. 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)) – (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

The 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 preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has been withdrawn.

National Trails meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

The Trustees believe there are no material uncertainties over the charity's activities being able to continue for the foreseeable future. The financial statements have therefore been prepared on a going concern basis.

The financial statements include the transactions, assets and liabilities of these accounts.

c. Income recognition

All income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

Income from Charitable Activities where entitlement is not conditional on the delivery of a specific performance by the charity are recognised when the charity becomes unconditionally entitled to the grant.

NOTES FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Period Ended 31 March 2023

d. Expenditure recognition

Expenditure is recorded on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings which aggregate all costs related to that category.

- Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in order to meet its charitable activities.
- Governance costs include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity.

e. Fixed Assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses.

f. Depreciation

Assets are depreciated over their estimated useful lives as follows:-

Computer Equipment	- 10% reducing balance
Office Equipment	- 10% reducing balance

h. Funds

Restricted funds are created when third party grants are made a particular area or purpose.

Designated funds are those funds earmarked by the trustees for a specific purpose.

Unrestricted funds represent monies available for general charitable purposes.

2. Donations and legacies

	2023 £
Grant funding	162,571
Donations and legacies	<u>60,000</u>
	<u><u>222,571</u></u>

NOTES FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Period Ended 31 March 2023

3. Income from Charitable Activities

	2023 £
Memberships	<u>6,429</u>

4. Expenditure

Expenditure	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2023 £
Charitable activities			
- Salaries	33,713	4,193	37,906
- Advertising	2,300	-	2,300
- Consulting	800	-	800
- Depreciation	240	-	240
- General expenses	2,988	-	2,988
- Insurance	160	-	160
- IT	1,054	-	1,054
- Legal expenses	1,541	145	1,686
- Rent	8,000	-	8,000
- Pension costs	1,875	-	1,875
- Postage	15	-	15
- Subscriptions	147	-	147
- Telephone	170	-	170
- Travel	4,167	-	4,167
Governance costs			
- Accountancy	<u>2,600</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,600</u>
Total	<u>59,770</u>	<u>4,338</u>	<u>64,108</u>

NOTES FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Period Ended 31 March 2023

5. Staff

Included in the accounts are recharged wages and costs of £37,906 relating to 2 employees.

The average number of employees in the year was 1.

No employee received emoluments exceeding £60,000 p.a. The Trustees received no remuneration during the year.

The Trust's share of Employer National Insurance contributions amounted to £2,460.

Included in wage costs is a provision for pension contributions of £2,094.

6. Tangible Fixed assets

	Computer equipment £	Office Equipment £	Total £
Cost			
Additions	1,476	326	1,802
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31 March 2023	<u>1,476</u>	<u>326</u>	<u>1,802</u>
Depreciation			
Charge in the year	178	62	240
At 31 March 2023	<u>178</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>240</u>
Net book value			
At 31 March 2023	<u><u>1,298</u></u>	<u><u>264</u></u>	<u><u>1,562</u></u>

The above assets are all used in the direct furtherance of the Trust's objectives.

NOTES FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Period Ended 31 March 2023

7. Other debtors

	2023 £
South West Coastal Path	1,268
Accrued grant income - DEFRA	<u>160,000</u>
	<u>161,268</u>

8. Cash at bank and in hand

	2023 £
Current account	<u>4,663</u>

9. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £
Accruals	<u>2,600</u>

NOTES FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Period Ended 31 March 2023

10. Restricted funds

	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Carried Forward
		£	£	£
DEFRA Core Grant	<u>160,000</u>	<u>(4,338)</u>	<u>4,338</u>	<u>160,000</u>
	<u>160,000</u>	<u>(4,338)</u>	<u>4,338</u>	<u>160,000</u>

11. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	£	£	£
Fund balances at 31 March 2023 are represented by:			
Tangible fixed assets	1,562	-	1,562
Net current assets	<u>3,330</u>	<u>160,000</u>	<u>163,330</u>
	<u>4,892</u>	<u>160,000</u>	<u>164,892</u>

12. Related party transactions

There have been no related party transactions in the year requiring disclosure.