

**ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Legal and administrative information	1
Trustees' Report	2
Receipts and Payments Account	5
Balance Sheet	6
Notes to the Accounts	7

**TRUSTEES**

The Trustees in office during the year were:

John Mairs (Chair)  
Richard Acton  
John Cheesman (appointed 31 October 2024)  
Peter Cornish  
Christopher Kirton  
Keith Lightfoot (Warden)  
Deborah Simmons  
Stuart Smith

**SITE ADDRESS**

Unstead Wetland Nature Reserve, Trunley Heath Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU5 0BS

**CONTACT ADDRESS**

c/o 9 Home Farm Road, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1TX

**PROFESSIONAL ADVISERS**

Lloyds Bank plc, 25 Gresham Street, London, EC2V 7HN

**REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER:** 1196835

**TRUSTEES' REPORT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

The Trustees present their Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025.

**Constitution**

Unstead Nature Community Group ('the Charity') is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, established on 29 November 2021. It is registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales with registered number 1196835.

**Objects and activities**

The object of the Charity is to promote, for the benefit of the public, the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment of Unstead Wetland Nature Reserve. Through volunteer action, the Group develops and maintains diverse habitats of the Reserve for the benefit of wildlife. It provides visitor facilities and information about the Reserve and its wildlife to create an educational and recreational resource.

The charity has no staff and all its activities are undertaken by volunteers. Workparties for volunteers are held on site every Thursday with administrative duties being undertaken by the Trustees.

**Trustees**

The trustees who held office during the Year are set out on the previous page. The Charity's constitution allows for between 3 and 12 trustees. One third of the trustees are required to retire each year, albeit normally being eligible for reappointment. No trustee may hold office for more than three terms. Trustees are elected by members at the AGM by simple majority of those present.

**Accounting principles**

As a small Charity, the Trustees have chosen to present the annual accounts on a receipts and payments basis. There is no requirement for the accounts to be independently examined or audited and the Trustees do not feel that this is necessary, given the small scale of operations.

**Reserves and Investments**

Donations and grants to the Charity which have been given for a specific purpose or project are held as 'restricted funds' and cannot be used for other purposes. To the extent that these funds are not fully spent at the year-end, they are carried forward to be used for those purposes in the future. Other income – primarily membership subscriptions – is available for general expenditure for the Reserve without restriction. The Trustees aim to hold at least 6 months' expenditure in reserve to meet future unforeseen expenditure. The sums involved are modest and are held with Lloyds Bank. The Charity has no investments.

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (*continued*)****Financial Review**

During the year the Charity received £ 11,519 of income (2024- £2,814) of which £ 7,519 (2024- £nil) was restricted funds. Expenditure during the year totalled £ 9,744 (2024 - £7,014), resulting in funds at the end of the year of £ 8,929 (2024 - £7,154). Of this, £ 3,414 (2024 - £2,994) was restricted funds, leaving £ 5,515 (2024 - £4,160) available as general reserves.

**Risk review**

The major risks to which the Charity is exposed, as identified by the Trustees, have been reviewed and systems have been established to mitigate those risks.

**Review of the Year's Activities**

A major project during the year was the construction of a pond dipping platform overlooking one of the South Meadow lagoons together with an access path and gate. This will be available for organised school and youth group visits, to encourage young people's involvement in, and appreciation of local wildlife. The materials were funded by a grant from Surrey County Council, but the construction was undertaken by our band of enthusiastic – and skilful – volunteers. A second significant project was the construction of a sand martin nest bank overlooking the 'Dry Lagoon'. This was generously supported by individual donations and, in particular, the construction of the main box itself by UK Power Network Services Ltd. The new 'cross-path' that joins the hide footpath at Stan's gate with the viewing platform and compound path was opened to members during the year. Work has continued to improve its drainage. It is closed to visitors during the bird-nesting season but is opened to members again in the autumn.

Through the year we have continued to develop the Nature Reserve to create a wider diversity of natural habitats attractive to wildlife of all kinds. Several hundred more sapling trees have been planted, particularly in the Works Field, to establish light woodland and hazel copses. Dead-hedge coups have been constructed around the hazel to reduce damage by deer. The boundary along Trunley Heath Road, beside the hide footpath, has been improved by laying the hedge, including planting more sapling native trees to fill in gaps.

In the South Meadow we have continued our work to diversify the flora and we have received further support from the charity Buglife in the form of wild flower seeds. After we had broadcast-sown the seeds, their introduction to the soil was greatly assisted by the hooves of Ronnie and Reggie – two Devon Red steers grazed by local farmer Tom Bowra of Upper Unstead Farm. New saplings were planted along the eastern edge of the meadow area to create a new hedgerow in due course.

As well as the more high-profile projects referred to above, the Reserve requires management - keeping access paths clear, looking after newly planted trees in their early years, hedge-laying, mending broken fences and gates, selective reed-cutting and willow coppicing and a myriad other jobs. These projects and maintenance tasks are all undertaken by volunteers on Thursday workparties. The Trustees are grateful for the willingness and enthusiasm of those volunteers and are pleased that the number of volunteers coming along has been increasing, now with a weekly average of 12, and adding up to 3,069 hours over the year. The Trustees also greatly appreciate the time given by other volunteers undertaking surveys at the Reserve – of birds, butterflies, reptiles, moths, bats, mammals, invertebrates, flora, fungi, lichens and water quality.

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (*continued*)****Review of the Year's Activities (*continued*)**

Membership has also been increasing as more people hear about the site and have been enjoying the birds and other wildlife to be seen at the Reserve. There were 219 members (including joint members) at the year end. Throughout the year members have been kept informed of activities through an excellent, well-illustrated monthly newsletter put together by the Warden.

**Future Plans**

We are discussing with Thames Water (the owner of the site) ways to enhance the wildlife habitats in the 'Back of Lagoon' area of the Reserve. Additionally we hope to work with our new neighbouring landowners to extend the benefit of the Reserve for local wildlife.

This annual report was approved by the Trustees at a meeting held on 22 May 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

*John Mairs*

John Mairs

*Chair of Trustees*

*Christopher Kirton*

Christopher Kirton

*Trustee*

**RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2025 £	Restricted Funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
<b><u>Income</u></b>					
Subscriptions		2,723	-	2,723	1,913
Grants		-	6,602	6,602	-
Other Donations		943	825	1,768	563
Gift Aid		426	-	426	338
<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>4,092</b>	<b>7,427</b>	<b>11,519</b>	<b>2,814</b>
<b><u>Charitable Expenditure</u></b>					
Materials		486	5,143	5,629	6,011
Tools		1,202	1,864	3,066	74
Bird food		236	-	236	285
Publicity and signage		110	-	110	249
Donation to bird-ringing group		200	-	200	-
<b><u>Governance Expenditure</u></b>					
Insurance		481	-	481	395
AGM venue hire		22	-	22	-
<b>Total Payments</b>		<b>2,737</b>	<b>7,007</b>	<b>9,744</b>	<b>7,014</b>
<b>Excess of Receipts over Payments/ (Payments over Receipts)</b>		<b>1,355</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>1,775</b>	<b>(4,200)</b>
Fund balances brought forward		4,160	2,994	7,154	11,354
<b>Fund balances carried forward</b>		<b>5,515</b>	<b>3,414</b>	<b>8,929</b>	<b>7,154</b>

<b>BALANCE SHEET</b> <b>AS AT 31 MARCH 2025</b>
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	Notes	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
<b><u>Assets</u></b>			
Bank balance		<b>8,929</b> =====	<b>7,154</b> =====
<b><u>Reserves</u></b>			
Restricted Funds	2	3,414	2,994
Unrestricted Funds	3	5,515 -----	4,160 -----
		<b>8,929</b> =====	<b>7,154</b> =====

The financial statements on pages 5-10 were approved by the Trustees at a meeting held on 22 May 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

*John Mairs*

John Mairs

*Chair of Trustees*

*Christopher Kirton*

Christopher Kirton

*Trustee*

<b>NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS</b>
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**1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES****Basis of Preparation**

The accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis in accordance with the Charities Act 2011. The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency and have been rounded to the nearest pound.

**Income and expenditure**

Income and expenditure is accounted for in the period in which it was received or paid. Expenditure is inclusive of VAT.

**Tangible Fixed Assets**

Expenditure is accounted for on a cash basis and thus no value is included in the accounts for any fixed assets other than the initial capital expenditure, shown in the Receipts and Payments Account.

**Donated Goods and Services**

The charity is grateful to its benefactors – both individuals and organisations - who have supplied tools and equipment, many trees (with stakes and guards), timber and other materials. These gifts in kind are not included in the accounts as there is no cash-based transaction to record.

The charity is also grateful for the services of its trustees, workparty volunteers, species surveyors and others who have given their expert time freely. However, no value is included in the accounts for the hours of unpaid work that they undertake.

**Gift Aid**

The Charity is eligible to claim Gift Aid on donations. Where donations are treated as restricted funds, any Gift Aid associated with such donations is treated as part of the relevant restricted fund.

**Restricted Funds**

These are gifts and grants which have been given to the Charity to be used in accordance with the wishes of the donor/grantor. They may only be applied for the purposes for which the funds were donated or granted.

**Unrestricted Funds**

The use of these funds has not been restricted to a particular purpose by donors. They are subdivided into Designated Funds and General Reserves.

**Designated Funds**

Designated funds are those funds which have been allocated by the Trustees for particular purposes. Further information on the nature and basis of the designated funds used by the Charity is given in Note 3.

**General Reserves**

General Reserves are the working fund of the Charity and are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the Charity's objectives. Among the uses of the General Reserves are the costs of maintenance and improvement of the Unstead Wetland Nature Reserve and the general administration of the Charity.

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

## 2. RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Public Access Fund	Sand martin Nestbank Fund	Dipping Platform Fund	Tools & Lectern Fund	Total
Year ended 31 March 2025	£	£	£	£	£
Brought forward	2,994	-	-	-	2,994
Donations received	-	825	-	-	825
Grants received	-	-	2,500	4,102	6,602
Gift Aid added	-	-	-	-	-
Expenditure*	(266)	(483)	(2,329)	(3,929)	(7,007)
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Carried forward at 31 March 2025	2,728	342	171	173	3,414
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
Year ended 31 March 2024	Public Access Fund	Trees Fund			Total
	£	£			£
Grant from Thames Water	7,056	125			7,781
Donations received	-	-			-
Gift Aid added	-	-			-
Expenditure*	(4,662)	(125)			(4,787)
	-----	-----			-----
Carried forward at 31 March 2024	2,994	-			2,994
	=====	=====			=====

\*Where actual expenditure exceeds the restricted fund available, the balance is covered by the Charity's general fund and is shown in the Receipts and Payments Account under 'Unrestricted Funds'.

The Public Access Fund results from a grant from Thames Water to enhance the public access to the Reserve. A significant proportion of this has been spent on materials for the construction of the new viewing platform.

The Sand martin Nestbank Fund arose from donations by individuals to fund the construction of a nest bank for sand martins overlooking a Reserve lagoon. This was substantially completed during the year, generously assisted by the free supply of materials and construction services by UK Power Networks Services Ltd.

The Dipping Platform Fund arose from a grant from Surrey County Council for the construction of a pond-dipping platform on one of the Reserve ponds. It was substantially completed during the year, being constructed by Unstead volunteers.

The Tools and Lectern fund derives from a grant from Surrey County Council for the provision of an information display board and for specific tools. Most of the tools were purchased during the year. The lectern was paid for during the year, although delivered and installed after the year-end.



## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

**3. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS**

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Designated Fund –Stan Capewell Fund	-	-
General Reserves	5,515	4,160
	-----	-----
	<b>5,515</b>	<b>4,160</b>
	=====	=====

During the previous year donations were received in memory of Stan Capewell. The Trustees decided to designate these donations towards the cost of purchase and installation of a gate to access a new path in the Reserve. The gate was purchased and installed during that year.

**4. FIXED ASSETS**

The accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis and thus no value is included in the accounts for any fixed assets that the Charity owns. At the Year end the Charity held numerous tools and equipment – mainly second-hand - that had been donated or purchased. Its most significant fixed assets are the hide constructed in about 2000 by Thames Water, a shed purchased in 2023, the viewing platform constructed in 2023 and the pond dipping platform constructed in 2024.

The nature reserve land is owned by Thames Water and the Charity has developed and maintained the site with their support. The Trustees are in the process of agreeing a formal lease for the site with Thames Water.

**5. DONATIONS IN KIND**

No value is included in the accounts for donations in kind. Many individuals have kindly volunteered their time in support of the Charity's work, both in developing and maintaining the Nature Reserve (including species surveying) and in the administration of the Charity. The Trustees are also grateful for legal advice provided free of charge in relation to the negotiation of a lease with Thames Water. A record of hours worked by volunteers on organised workparties is maintained, although many more hours are freely given by Trustees and others.

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
Workparty volunteer hours	<b>3,191</b>	<b>2,806</b>
	=====	=====

In addition to regular or occasional Unstead volunteers, corporate and group volunteering was undertaken by the following during the year:

Atlantic Technology Ltd  
 Haslemere Draca Explorers  
 Biological Sciences Society, Royal Holloway, University of London  
 UK Power Networks Services Ltd

<b>NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)</b>
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**5. DONATIONS IN KIND (continued)**

The Charity has also received numerous donations of tools, equipment, materials and trees as well as advice and assistance. The Trustees are grateful to all these benefactors. Organisations that have given to the Charity during the year include:

- Buglife
- Surrey Amphibian and Reptile Group
- Surrey County Council
- Surrey Wildlife Trust
- The Conservation Volunteers
- The Woodland Trust
- UK Power Networks Services Ltd
- Upper Unstead Farm