



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From 01/04/2023 **To** 31/03/2024

Charity name: West Dorset Wilding

Charity registration number: 1196964

Objectives and Activities

	SORP reference	
Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document	Para 1.17	The objects of the CIO are: To promote for the benefit of the public the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment by promoting biological diversity and restoring degraded ecological systems. To advance the education of the public in the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment.
Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts.	Para 1.17 and 1.19	Activities include: To deliver environmental projects for the benefit of the public; To educate the general public, particularly farmers and landowners, about the benefits of natural process led ecosystem restoration, through meetings, emails, online or other activities; To consult and discuss with the general public about issues in nature conservation; To undertake and disseminate research into the nature of the Charity's focus area; To recruit members for the benefit of education and fundraising; To undertake fundraising for the delivery of the above activities.

Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit	Para 1.18	Trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit, and have a standing item at board meetings to remind them of their role and function.
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Achievements and Performance

	SORP reference	
Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole.	Para 1.20	Introduction Over this year West Dorset Wilding built upon its early successes to lay the foundations for long-term positive change for nature in West Dorset, with an initial focus on the Brit Catchment. A significant achievement this year has been our successful application to Defra's Landscape Recovery Programme, which will shape our agenda for change over the next 20+ years. This development is discussed in more detail at the end of this report. Public Consultation on Beaver Release The early part of the year included a public consultation on the potential for wild release of beavers in the Brit Catchment. This involved a series of in-person events and an online consultation, gathering detailed feedback from more than 230 local residents. The in-person events were held in Netherbury, Loders, Bridport, Broadoak, and Beaminster, featuring displays, expert talks, and even a stuffed beaver named Justin! The outcome of the consultation was overwhelmingly positive, with more than 80% of residents and over 60% of local landowners and farmers expressing support for the wild release. However, we recognised that some concerns remained. In response, we published the consultation results and set up a webpage with a detailed FAQ section to address a wide range of issues. This information can be found at westdorsetwilding.org/beavers.

	Feasibility Study for Beaver Release Alongside the consultation, we partnered with Mark Elliott, a beaver specialist, and a team from Exeter University to determine the habitat availability and overall feasibility for such a wild release. The outcomes of both of these studies were positive, with significant capacity in the higher reaches of the catchment to accommodate beavers, and with good availability of food. Of course all of this depends on whether the Government will be willing to allow licensed wild releases. Our work on beavers is being continued in 24/25 through the Brit Valley project detailed below, and we want to acknowledge the support of Natural England over the last year on this project. Innovation Fund Project This year also saw the continuation of the Innovation Fund Project, supported by Rewilding Britain. Highlights of the project included the creation of a Community Engagement Strategy, the mapping of above-ground carbon by the University of Exeter, the first catchment-wide breeding bird survey, and the development of a baseline Geographical Information System (GIS) database of the catchment's natural attributes. These efforts have been invaluable in preparing for the Brit Valley Project. For those interested, detailed information about the breeding bird survey is available at westdorsetwilding.org/baseline. Highlights of the survey include the recording of 79 species from 7,713 bird records, with 13 species on the Red List (highest conservation concern) and 19 on the Amber List (medium priority), representing 23% and 22% of the UK totals for each list, respectively. Brit Valley Project and Landscape Recovery Programme In June 2023, the government announced the second call for applications to its Environmental Land Management (ELMs) Landscape Recovery Programme. The Trustees decided to submit a bid focusing on
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		the Brit Catchment. With a generous donation from a benefactor, we assembled a small, part-time team to prepare the bid between July and September. The result was the Brit Catchment Recovery Project, now known as the Brit Valley Project, which saw 53 farmers and landowners agreeing to work together to enhance nature across 3,700 hectares of the catchment area. In December, we were thrilled to learn that our bid had been successful. This achievement required considerable paperwork and preparation in anticipation of the project's start on April 1st, 2024. While details of the project will be covered in next year's report, this success marks a significant milestone for our small, farmer-led organisation in undertaking a large-scale initiative. Further details can be found at westdorsetwilding.org/brit. Impact on beneficiaries and wider society The work this year has directly helped people in the area to understand more about nature and wildlife and in particular about the role of beavers in nature restoration. More than 300 people attended meetings and many more will have seen information online. Our work this year in preparation for the Landscape Recovery project that starts next year will help many farmers and landowners in the wider Brit Catchment to look after their land better for nature, for 20+ years. This project will also help many more people in the area better understand, and therefore care for nature.
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Financial Review

Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period	Para 1.21	During the past year we have successfully raised funds to support a small team to implement the existing funded projects and put together the Landscape Recovery bid. However, the funding environment remains complex, and securing core funding has been challenging. While donors are often eager to support projects, they are less
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		inclined to cover staffing and other core costs required to bring these projects to fruition. The Landscape Recovery grant will be a game changer for West Dorset Wilding, enabling us to employ staff for the first time, in 24/25. However, it does not address the ongoing issue of core funding, which will need additional support, alongside improving our reserves. We are therefore seeking to bolster our fundraising capabilities at both board and operational level.
Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held	Para 1.22	From policy written and approved by Trustees Oct 2024: Rationale The trustees have reviewed their financial obligations and have agreed to set aside a sum to allow time for the CIO to seek alternative funds if there is an unexpected shortfall in income or wind up the CIO and pay any contractual obligations in the event of the Trustees agreeing that West Dorset Wilding is no longer a going concern. Establishing the level of reserves In setting the level of reserves required for this purpose the Trustees have reviewed their contractual obligations such as staff and other outgoings. This is more complex than in 2023 as the organisation has a major contract with Defra to deliver against a Landscape Recovery project. This covers the vast majority of the organisational costs, with very limited time given over to non-Landscape Recovery work. However, the annual liability for WDW under current contracts are just under £8,000, which, if there were problems with core costs, could be reduced further through notice period. Should this be the case, and no staff were employed for WDW time, a minimum of £2,000pa should be seen as sufficient to fulfil statutory obligations through contracts.

		The Trustees therefore target an £8,000 reserve but acknowledge that £2,000 will be sufficient to fulfil statutory obligations.
Amount of reserves held	Para 1.22	At the end of the financial year the surplus was £9,889, of which £2,100 was restricted. This left £7,789 as reserves, which met the policy.
Reasons for holding zero reserves	Para 1.22	n/a
Details of fund materially in deficit	Para 1.24	n/a
Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern	Para 1.23	The Trustees agreed that the charity can continue to operate as a going concern.

Structure, Governance and Management

Description of charity's trusts:		
Type of governing document (trust deed, royal charter)	Para 1.25	Constitution
How is the charity constituted? (e.g unincorporated association, CIO)	Para 1.25	CIO by Association
Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g. election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees	Para 1.25	Election at AGM or co-option, no organisational appointments

Reference and Administrative details

Charity name	West Dorset Wilding
Other name the charity uses	n/a
Registered charity number	1196964
Charity's principal address	Unit 10C Pineapple Business Park Pineapple Lane Salwayash Dorset DT6 5DB

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Luke Montagu	Chair		
2	Nicholas Gray	Treasurer	Retired as Trustee 31/3/24	
3	Arthur Crutchley			
4	Philip Colfox			
5	Tarsha Finney			
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Corporate trustees – names of the directors at the date the report was approved

Director name		
n/a		

Name of trustees holding title to property belonging to the charity

Trustee name	Dates acted if not for whole year	
n/a		

Funds held as custodian trustees on behalf of others

Description of the assets held in this capacity	n/a
Name and objects of the charity on whose behalf the assets are held and how this falls within the custodian charity's objects	n/a
Details of arrangements for safe custody and segregation of such assets from the charity's own assets	n/a

Additional information (optional)**Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)**

Type of adviser	Name	Address
Accountant	Leigh Hansford	Coombe Hope Accountants 60 West Street Bridport Dorset DT6 3QP

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

Samuel Rose – Executive Director (self-employed in this financial year)

Exemptions from disclosure**Reason for non-disclosure of key personnel details**

n/a

Other optional information

n/a

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	Luke Montagu	Philip Colfox
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Chair	
Date	17/12/23	

West Dorset Wilding

Accounts

For the Year Ended 31st March 2024

WEST DORSET WILDING
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
Income		
Subscriptions - Voting Membership	8,250	6,250
Subscriptions - Non voting Membership and linked donations	2,013	628
Individual donations	19,250	750
Corporate grants	0	4,847
Sundry income	1,003	0
<u>Restricted project income</u>		
Rewilding Britain	0	13,000
Natural England	0	8,000
	<u>30,516</u>	<u>33,474</u>
Expenditure		
Executive Director	13,150	9,750
Support Work	2,726	75
Reimbursed staff expenses	426	0
Recruitment costs	575	0
Postage & Stationery	29	5
Phone & Internet	216	216
PR/Design	500	0
Print & Products	79	0
Consultancy	375	0
Insurance	96	96
Accountancy	240	0
HR/Legal Costs	210	0
Donor box fees	16	9
IT costs	97	0
Event costs	23	35
Sundry expenditure	1,069	0
<u>Restricted project expenditure</u>		
Rewilding Britain	12,546	6,163
Natural England	4,830	550
	<u>37,202</u>	<u>16,899</u>
Surplus / (Defecit) for period	<u>-6,686</u>	<u>16,575</u>
Opening Balance	16,575	0
Closing Balance	9,889	16,575



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
West Dorset Wilding

On accounts for the year
ended

31st March 2024

Charity no
(if any)

1196964

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2023.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 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 (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

Date: 25th October 2024

Name:

Leigh Hansford

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

FCCA (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants)

Address:

17 Stuart Way

Bridport

Dorset, DT6 4AU

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.