



Registered Charity No. 1197155

Wildlife Friendly Otley

Annual Report June

2023 - May 2024



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Foreword

This year our young charity attracted our first patron Dr George McGavin - the illustrious Entomologist and TV Presenter. Our charity also grew this year with the Trustees voting in favour of adopting the work of Wharfedale Barn Owls under our umbrella. The founder Stewart Barlow subsequently joined the board of trustees. The group have recently become a part of our small charity and will run as a subcommittee.

Our charitable objects are:

- To promote for the benefit of the public the conservation of the wildlife and wildlife habitats and protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment of Otley and the surrounding area.
- To advance the education and appreciation of the public regarding the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment.

The work of our charity is divided into seven subcommittees (see figure 1); Campaigns, Communications, Education, Events, Finance & Governance, Habitat Restoration and Barn Owls. The work of each subcommittee for the past year will be described in the remainder of this report.

Thank you to our membership, which has grown significantly from 212 in May 2023 to 291 in May 2024.

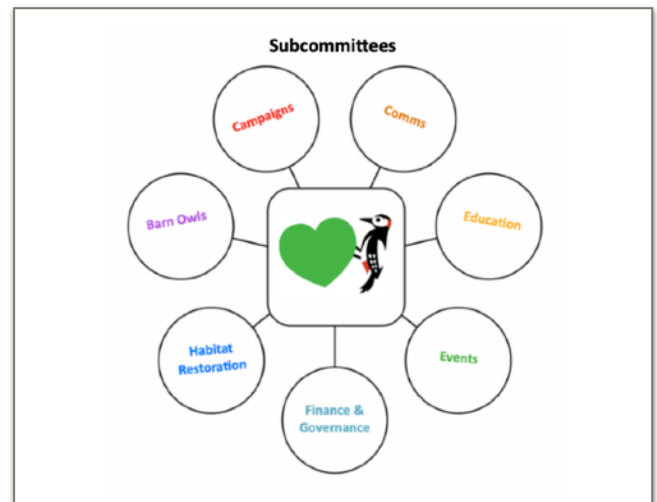


Figure 1 Structure of the charity.



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The Trustees

As of May 2024, we have 10 trustees:

Claire Blindell	Catherine Burton	Helen Hey
Jane Smith	Neil Griffin	Nic Shipp
River Six	Rob Tindall	Sarah Shipp
Stewart Barlow		

Our schedule of meeting as trustees is as follows;

January	General committee meeting
February	No meeting
March	General committee meeting
April	No meeting
May	Trustee meeting
June	AGM
July	No meeting
August	Trustee meeting
September	No meeting
October	General committee meeting
November	Trustee meeting
December	No meeting

The subcommittees also meet as individual working groups regularly.



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Campaigns

We continue to campaign as the voice for wildlife in Otley, to protect the and promote the fragile relationship between people and wildlife. This year we have achieved this in a number of ways, some of which will be explored in the reports of work by the other subcommittees.

The task of this subcommittee this year was to manage and coordinate current and upcoming campaigns, including collaborations with other groups. Such as those listed below;

Feed the Birds

Equipment to feed the birds was distributed to a number of households and sheltered housing units, identified as benefitting from this connection to wildlife because they were socially vulnerable or immobile.

Leeds and Bradford Airport

As a charity, we wrote an objection to the planned expansion of Leeds and Bradford Airport. The plan to expand during a climate and biodiversity emergency is madness.

Pesticide Free Town

We officially registered Otley with the national effort, Pesticide Free Town campaign (<https://www.pan-uk.org/pesticide-free/>). This will also run alongside our Wildlife Friendly Gardens campaigning (see Habitat Restoration below) this year.

Where to see wildlife

Our popular Where to see wildlife leaflet was updated and reissued, new copies are available around town. As before it encourages the residents and visitors to Otley to go spend time in our green spaces and connect with the wildlife and nature found there.



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Communications

This subcommittee includes the management of press releases, social media and the website.

Press releases

We have maintained an active presence in the traditional media, with some room for growth on social media. There have been many press releases issued by the charity and published in the local Wharfedale Observer and in wider media, such as the Yorkshire Evening Post.

Publicity for the 2023 Wildlife Arts Festival was again extensive, appearing in local and regional press.

We have also supported Friends of Weston Woods by organising press releases for the visit of Julia Davies whose loan enabled the Friends to mount a successful bid, and subsequently the launch of a new crowdfunding campaign to repay the loan.

We also publicised the joining of Wharfedale Barn Owls to our charity.

Social media

Many of our activities and achievements go under reported on social media, due to not having enough support. We are actively recruiting more help here. Having said that our social media figures have continued to increase this year.

Our social media figures are as follows

Newsletters

Helen and River have successfully put out 3 newsletters in this last year, every season. These newsletters were sent to all out members.

Other media

Both Amy-Jane Beer and George McGavin (our guest speakers at the 2023 Wildlife Arts Festival) praised WFO, our aims and work in their radio interviews about their talks.

Stewart set up our own YouTube channel; Wildlife Friendly TV. It includes a live feed of one of our occupied barn owl boxes.

Stewart also created a short film at our community orchard planting event (see Habitat Restoration below).

The website needs updating, we are actively recruiting help for this.



1K+ up from 961



600 up from 538



979 up from 908



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Education

The purpose of the Education subcommittee is to establish and maintain working relationships with the Otley group of schools, promote onsite habitat management and organise adult education opportunities.

All Saints Primary School

Neil returned to the school and helped their Global Champions repair their old mini-beast hotel. As part of the Wildlife Arts Festival build up, author Jeanne Willis visited the school to repeat the day she did at Westgate last year, again funded mostly by Wharfedale Naturalists.

Ashfield Primary School

Neil successfully led a series of nature-engagement lessons at Ashfield Primary School. These were based on the Science curriculum and funded by Wharfedale Naturalists' Society (Nursery and Years 1, 2, 3 and 5).

Pupils provided wildlife poems and pictures for the Wildlife Arts Festival exhibition at the Courthouse.

The school accepted our donation in the form of a Microclimate Books bundle.

In February Neil visited Year 2 to make a presentation "How local groups can have a positive impact on wildlife and climate" as part of the new climate change curriculum.

In March n 11 March, River, Jane and Neil helped pupils plant up the school verge with bulbs and wildflower seed.

Pool Primary School

In November 2023 Cathy, Neil and River, with parents and pupils of Pool Primary met at the neglected pond at Pool Primary to bring it back to life. The pond was in a much worse state than anticipated, as well as being choked with Irises, the pond was also full of rubbish, including cones and laptops! After removing some of the damaged liner, the pond was still holding water. The decision was made to promote the existing pond as an ephemeral (seasonal) pond, whilst also finding funding for a couple of raised ponds for the school to pond dip.

As part of Science Week, on March 20 Cathy and I spent an afternoon working with Year 4.

Cathy led Wildlife Detective activities including identifying tracks, poo and bones; whilst Neil supported children planting bulbs and seed outside plus the educational wildlife games.



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Prince Henry's Grammar School

On Timanyane (citizenship) Day, 11 July Year 10 students helped us reducing cleavers and bindweed and watering beds at Wharfemeadow Park. Students have also assisted us staffing stalls at events (eg Carnival), supporting activities (eg Discovery Day) and balsam-bashing on the Chevin. Our Patron George McGavin held a special presentation "The Secret Science of Sewage" for Year 10 as part of the Wildlife Arts Festival build up.

Helen, Neil and River met with the Eco-mittee, teachers from the Science, IT and Geography departments were also in attendance, plus the site manager. We explained the opportunities for students to get involved with bioblitzes (inc one at Henry's) and the barn owl project. The meeting also involved talking to the students about becoming a trustee when they turn 16, Helen has continued to work with them.

Queensway Primary School, Yeadon

As part of their Science Week on March 14 Neil ran a wildlife day that involved every pupil in the (small) school. This followed the usual structure, with the addition of dipping in their very well-stocked pond (there were many newts and frogs).

Westgate Primary School

The school accepted our donation in the form of a Microclimate Books bundle.

Claire, Jane and Neil helped pupils from their Eco Team with planting at Grove Hill park to supplement that done last autumn.



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Events

Chevin Discovery Day 2023

As well as our stall, Cathy led a mini-beast hunt, Steve led walks on wildflowers and foraging, and Rebecca and Neil led a smartphone photography walk. It was a very successful event. It was decided together with the partners of the event, the Friends of Chevin Forest 2024 will be a fallow year for the Discovery Day but will return in 2025 and will be a biannual event going forward.

Otley Carnival 2023

Our stall attracted plenty of attention, despite the rain and a huge swarm of bees, which some people seemed to think we'd laid on. We sold wildlife-friendly plants kindly donated by members, and exhibited a variety of natural artefacts such as the shed skin of a grass snake.

Otley Science Festival 2023

As well as our stall, Steve led an autumn/winter trees walk, Wharfedale Mens' Shed led a build-a-nestbox workshop.

Walking Festival 2023

We ran well-attended walks about (1)wildflowers and (2)trees (both led by Steve); (3)where to watch wildlife in Otley and (4)on the Chevin (led by Neil and Steve).

Wildlife Arts Festival 2023

Our ever popular festival returned in 2023 with sponsorship from Otley Town Council and local business Sinclair's. The festival featured triple ticketed events for the first time: These Hills Are Ours, Daniel Bye & Boff Whalley; Amy Jane Beer and George McGavin. As in previous years we hosted a wildlife art exhibition in the main courtroom of Otley Courthouse: a high-quality exhibition of nature art in a variety of media by 5 creative groups and a further 21 individuals. As well as a series of free talks in the Labour Rooms. Also happening were a schedule of workshops for adults and children; a linocut printing workshop by Kim Coley, a poetry workshop, squirrel crafts with Pat Foster, sticker art with Alex Eve. In the hall with the artwork were 8 stalls: WFO, Otley Camera Club, Helen Sky Roberts (wildlife photographer), YWT, Friends of Weston Woods, Wharfedale Naturalists, Prickly Pigs, Chevin Watercolour Group; and outside there was a live a chainsaw sculpting demo.

The expanded festival was a success.

Finance and Governance

The financial report below has been submitted by Sarah Shipp, our treasurer.

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS

For the period from 01/04/2023 to 31/03/2024

		Restricted	Unrestricted
Carried forward from 31/03/2023	£4967.84	£4467.25	£500.59
Receipts (Section A1)	£5067.75		
Payments (Section A2)	£5992.08		
Net	£4043.51		
Bank (Section B1)	£3993.51		
Petty cash (Section B2)	£50.00		
	£4043.51		

Section A1

Receipts made up of:	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
Donations from individuals	£25.00	£4.98	£29.98
Donations from businesses		£610.00	£610.00
Wildlife Arts Festival 2022			
OTC/LCC (Leeds Inspired Grant)	£400.00		£400.00
Wharfedale Naturalists:			
wildflower seeds grant	£800.00		£800.00
Co-Op Funeralcare	£763.20		£763.20
Events takings	£2175.50	289.07	£2464.57
Total	£4163.70	£904.05	£5067.75

Section A2

Payments made up of	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
Website		£28.78	£28.78
Bank charges		£8.40	£8.40
Events expenses	£2671.09	£320.31	£2991.40
Feed the Birds (Co-Op)	£363.64		£363.64
Barn owl boxes			

Wildlife for schools	£82.19		£82.19
Miscellaneous expenses	£400.00	£252.50	£652.50
Stationary and printing		£398.39	£398.39
Insurance		£159.60	£159.60
Habitat restoration	£1164.70	£142.48	£1307.18
Totals	£4681.62	£1310.46	£5992.08
Surplus in year ending 31/03/2023	- £517.92	- £406.41	- £924.33
Carried forward at 31/03/2023	£3949.33	£94.18	£4043.51

Section B1

Bank Account

Opening balance at 01/04/2023	£4917.84
Receipts	£5067.75
Payments	- £5992.08
	£3993.51

Section B2

Petty Cash

Opening balance at 16/12/2021	£50.00
Receipts	0.00
Payments	0.00
	50.00



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Habitat Restoration

Work towards the goals of our Nature Recovery Plan for Otley drive the work of this subcommittee. Progress is slower than we would like, but progress is being made.

A third community orchard was planted in St Martins Fields in October 2023, as well as a line of fruit trees in Grove Hill Park. We continued to diversify the underplanting at all our three community orchard sites with wildflower seeds made possible by a donation from Wharfedale Naturalists. We also planted a number of wildflower patches through the town, to add to our existing meadow islands, including at Grove Hill Park, and Adlington House.

We will have continued to work with Leeds Parks and Countryside to make this progress possible, through signing Community Partnership Agreements.

Otley Town Council commissioned a biodiversity audit of the habitat in the whole parish of Otley. The work was carried out by Haycock and Jay Associates, mapped by River. This will inform a lot of our habitat restoration work going forward, particularly creating meaningful wildlife corridors through the urban areas (including peoples gardens).

After a focus on the community orchards and biodiversity audit part of the nature recovery plan in 2023, we shifted into wildlife in gardens and wider wildlife corridors as our primary focus in 2024.

Otley Town Council funded us to produce a leaflet on restoring wildlife in gardens, thanks to our volunteers 6500 were delivered to every household in Otley.

As well as the leaflet, we are running our first annual Wildlife Garden Competition.

Barn Owls

Since joining the charity, the Barn Owl group have been restricted to become a subcommittee and has spent time recruiting members and assigning roles. Stewart has recruited a new ringer and can now begin building field skills within the group this season.

The nestbox camera in Leathley has been a success so far, with the barn owl named Betty laying her first egg being laid on 27 April at 1.10 am.

Stewart ran a successful Facebook fundraiser raised £93.78 and has been to be transferred to WFO's paypal through the Paypal Giving Fund.

WILDLIFE FRIENDLY OTLEY

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS

For the period from 01/04/2023 to 31/03/2024

Carried forward from 31/03/2023

Receipts (Section A1)

Payments (Section A2)

Net

Bank (Section B1)

Petty cash (Section B2)

Brought forward from year ended 31/03/23

Section A1: Receipts made up of:

Donations from individuals

Donations from businesses/organisations

Wildlife Arts Festival 2023 OTC/LCC (Leeds Inspired grant)

Wharfedale Naturalists: wildflower seeds grant

Tesco: gardening equipment for children

Co-op Funeralcare

Events takings

Section A2: Payments made up of:

Website

Bank charges

Events expenses

Feed the Birds (Co-Op)

Wildlife - direct support (barn owl boxes)

Wildlife for schools

Miscellaneous expenses

Stationery & printing

Insurance

Habitat restoration

Surplus/(Deficit) in year ending 31/03/2023

Carried forward at 31/03/2023

Made up of:

Section B1: Bank account:

Opening balance at 01/04/2023

Receipts

Payments

Section B2: Petty cash:

Opening balance at 01/04/2023

Receipts

Payments

Section B3: Notes to the accounts:

Signature:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Slupp.', is written in black ink.

Date:05/05/2024



**WILDLIFE
FRIENDLY
OTLEY**

	4967.84
	5067.75
	5992.08
	4043.51

	3993.51
	50.00
	4043.51

Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
4467.25	500.59	4967.84
25.00	4.98	29.98
	610.00	610.00
400.00		400.00
800.00		800.00
		0.00
763.20		763.20
2175.50	289.07	2464.57
		0.00
		0.00
4163.70	904.05	5067.75
	28.78	28.78
	8.40	8.40
2671.09	320.31	2991.40
363.64		363.64
		0.00
82.19		82.19
400.00	252.50	652.50
	398.39	398.39
	159.60	159.60
1164.70	142.48	1307.18
4681.62	1310.46	5992.08

-517.92	-406.41	-924.33
3949.33	94.18	4043.51

4043.51

4917.84
5067.75
-5992.08
3993.51

50.00
0.00
0.00
50.00

4043.51

Trustee & Treasurer, Wildlife Friendly Otley

