



## Annual Report 2024/2025

### **Chair's report**

#### **Introduction**

I became Chair in January, when Tim Reed stepped down and on behalf of the Committee and the Friends, I would like to thank Tim for all that he contributed to this role. Tim led the Committee to some important decisions, most notably the replacement of the Boardwalk with fibregrid, and he developed a comprehensive management plan to guide the Island's future. The recovery of the reed bed is testament to that. Tim has continued his involvement, carrying out bat surveys, giving talks and writing for our regular feature in the Hunts Post.

I must also report that Paul Claydon, who has been our Huntingdonshire District Council Ranger for an incredible 18 years, is stepping back from Holt Island duties, although not stepping away completely. Paul has done so much for the Island, it's impossible to sum it all up in a sentence. Thank you for everything, and especially your volunteer lunches! We welcome Sam Dobson as our new Ranger.

#### **A thank you to all our volunteers**

I have been genuinely astonished, and humbled, by the sheer number and range of volunteers who give of their time freely – and considerably – to support our wonderful Island. The Committee brings a wealth of expertise to bear on so many issues. Much of their work goes on behind the scenes but it is all essential. There are the 20+ volunteers who work on the Island, a group of whom have been giving an additional morning a week, sometimes more, to lay the fibregrid. Others are involved with species recording – birds, plants and animals – and filming. A team of volunteers supports school visits, guided walks and Family Fun Days. Another team opens and closes the Island, there are our site checkers, and can we add several thousand bees to our volunteer list; they certainly work hard? My thanks, and that of the Committee's, to all of you.

#### **Events**

The events programme was as full as ever. The Family Fun Day was a huge success. Local schools have visited, as have groups from the Guides and the Brownies. We have hosted visits from the Rotary Club, the RSPB and Making Space, a charity that provides breaks for those caring for a loved one. Nearly 200 people visited on Heritage Open Day. We supported St Ives Green Week, opening the Island all week, and offering free guided tours. It is important to maintain a balance between 'nature' and 'access' but I think we get it right. The animals seem to be able to cope with the occasional influx of humans.

#### **Fundraising**

A major purpose of the Friends is fundraising to support the maintenance and development of the Island. Adopt-a-Box, the Christmas Fundraiser, the sale of calendars and Holt Island Honey, and many generous donations are essential to keeping the Island open and accessible to all. The Boardwalk fundraising campaign (see below) is making very good progress and is ensuring the Island's future.

## **Awards**

Once again, Holt Island was on the Judge's route for Anglia in Bloom. I am delighted to record that the Island helped St Ives to achieve a Gold Award. But to cap that St Ives was chosen as the region's representative for Britain in Bloom and won the large town category. The Britain in Bloom judges' report said, 'We were extremely impressed with the location, and the knowledge of the volunteers at the Holt Island Nature Reserve. This must be one of the best examples of conservation we have seen for some time.' This year Anglia in Bloom has a dedicated category for Nature Reserves, and we have entered in our own right – watch this space!

## **Conclusion**

It was a difficult winter, with major damage to the Boardwalk caused by a falling tree. Hours of cold, muddy work by the Island's dedicated volunteers, guided by the District Council Rangers, repaired the damage and we were able to re-open the Island as planned on 19th April. People being on the Island enjoying themselves, learning about nature and finding that 'calm moment' is what it is all about. Thank you to everyone involved.

***Keith Grimwade***

3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025

## **Secretary's Report**

We have held six committee meetings since our last AGM.

I continue to put together our quarterly newsletter the Islander and maintain our website. Please let me know if there is anything in particular you would like to see featured in either – email [secretary@holtisland.org](mailto:secretary@holtisland.org).

***Helen Cripps***

## **Membership Secretary's Report**

Life Household	30
Life Individual	48
Annual Household	62
Annual Individual	45
Honorary	5
Total	190

The membership has a healthy base and we hope it will continue to grow. Most members are either Life or pay by standing order, which makes my life easier. Membership renewal was on the 1<sup>st</sup> June. If you haven't already done so, please consider renewing your membership and contact me if you need any help .

***James Knight***

## **Treasurer's report**

Last year's accounts, as presented, were approved and signed off by the Independent Examiner.

The accounts for this year are set out on the next page and have been submitted to the Independent Examiner for checking and approval.

We have had a record-breaking year with an income of £26,916 matched by an expenditure of £25,638 resulting in a surplus for the year of £1,278.

Over £21,000 has been generated from donations which has cascaded through gift aid and interest to significantly increase both in the year. Adopt-a-Box and subscriptions have both held up well although there has been a slightly concerning trend to Life rather than Annual members.

Sales of calendars and honey coupled with our annual fundraisers continue to contribute the essential extra funding we need.

We have purchased over £23,000 of Fibregrid in the period and have committed to the funding of a further £9,600 in the new year.

***Basil Belcher***

**FRIENDS of HOLT ISLAND NATURE RESERVE**  
**Charity Reg No. 1198894**  
**Receipts and Payments for the year up to 31st May 2025**

	<u>Year to</u> <u>31/05/25</u>	<u>Year</u> <u>2024</u>
<b><u>RECEIPTS</u></b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Island Box Collection	303.40	505.21
Adopt-a-Box	917.43	903.24
Donations	21,256.77	8,000.76
Interest	599.30	305.31
Subscriptions Annual	860.00	912.00
Subscriptions Life	150.00	75.00
Gift Aid	1,193.65	694.55
Quiz	0.00	0.00
Miscellaneous	1,635.27	1,939.30
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>£ <u>26,915.82</u></b>	<b>£ <u>13,335.37</u></b>

<b><u>PAYMENTS</u></b>		
Materials & Fittings	23,233.68	11,572.31
Furniture & Equipment	144.31	259.26
Birdfeed	179.46	264.38
Education Materials	314.70	64.50
Insurance	96.00	96.00
Newsletters	341.70	438.25
Subscriptions	76.00	101.00
AGM & Events	393.05	252.55
Bank Charges	89.98	89.52
Miscellaneous	769.06	780.90
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>£ <u>25,637.94</u></b>	<b>£ <u>13,918.67</u></b>
Surplus for the Year	1,277.88	-583.30
Balance Brought Forward	31,155.38	31,738.68
<b>Balance Carried Forward</b>	<b>£ <u>32,433.26</u></b>	<b>£ <u>31,155.38</u></b>

**Account Balances Compared to that on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024**

	<u>31/05/25</u>	<u>31/05/24</u>
HSBC Current Account	246.46	255.88
HSBC Deposit Account	32,186.80	30,899.50
Sums awaiting Paying in		
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>£ <u>32,433.26</u></b>	<b>£ <u>31,155.38</u></b>

Basil Belcher  
Treasurer

Alan Curtis  
Independent Examiner

## **Boardwalk Campaign Progress Report at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025**

### **Introduction**

In February 2024, the trustees of Friends of Holt Island Nature Reserve agreed to commence a fundraising programme to completely replace the wooden boardwalk on Holt Island. This decision was made because the old wooden boards were requiring replacement every six years due to increased flooding of the River Great Ouse and the new material to replace them, Fibregrid, was likely to last 40+ years. Fibregrid is however, much more expensive than the wooden boards it replaces. It was estimated that it could cost up to £85,000 in materials which would be fitted by our volunteer workforce.

A feasibility study for the potential for raising £85,000 had suggested that it could be possible to raise sufficient to complete the objective within a three-year period. Fundraising commenced in early 2024, initially with applications to trusts and foundations who might support us.

### **Progress to date**

To date we have raised £47,936; 56.4% of our fundraising objective. We have approached a number of trusts and foundations where their objectives aligned with ours and we have also received very generous financial support from a number of private individuals who share our passion for Holt Island.

We are particularly grateful to the following trusts and companies who have so far provided financial assistance:

- Jack Patson Charitable Trust
- Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust
- Brian D Newman Foundation for the Environment
- The Lennox Hannah Trust
- Chapman Charitable Trust
- Natural Cambridgeshire
- HDH Wills 1965 Charitable Trust
- St Ives Rotary Club
- Ikigai
- Tacconi Green & Co
- Aveva

Without this support and that of some of our Friends, our progress to date would not have been possible.

We are still pursuing applications to trusts; however, invite the help and assistance of our Friends to provide introductions to others who might support us. If you think you can help us, please contact David Street, our fundraising lead and trustee at [dgstreet@btinternet.com](mailto:dgstreet@btinternet.com) or by phone on 07938 141201.

***David Street***  
***Trustee***

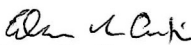
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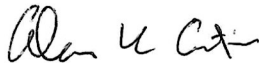
### Independent Examiner's Statement

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 or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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.

Signed:



Name: Alan Curtis

Address: 15 Redwell Close, St Ives, Cambs, PE27 6NY

Date:

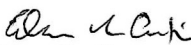
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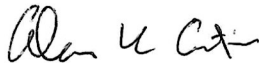
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