

Trustees' Annual Report for the Year Ended March 2025

Plymouth Sound National Marine Park CIO

Charity Number 1205869

1. Introduction

The trustees of Plymouth Sound National Marine Park CIO are pleased to present the charity's first annual report, covering the period from its registration in November 2023 to March 2025. As the UK's first National Marine Park, this inaugural period has been dedicated to establishing strong governance foundations, developing the approach to governance and beginning to align the project work being delivered by the lottery funded Horizons programme with the long term stewardship of Plymouth Sound's natural and cultural heritage.

2. Structure, Governance and Management

2.1 Legal Structure

Plymouth Sound National Marine Park is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The CIO structure provides a clear legal identity, limited liability for trustees, and a governance framework suited to a partnership-driven, place-based environmental charity.

2.2 Governing Document

The charity is governed by its constitution. During this early period following registration, the trustees met to work on ~~the~~ bringing together ~~of~~ the Horizons project governance and previous shadow Board structure within the CIO. This process is underway but given the complexities of a new type of approach and ongoing work, integration will be gradual to ensure all stakeholders are engaged and supportive. During the first year, trustees worked with the Shadow Board to establish a process for integration that would enable both continuity and growth for the CIO.

2.3 Trustee Recruitment and Appointment

As a newly formed organisation with a broad mission, establishing a capable and representative trustee board is a priority. The constitution supports a Board of up to 12 trustees. During the first year it became clear that some of the organisations involved with the CIO would not be able to become trustees. It was therefore agreed that there would be a non-voting role created so that organisations who needed direct involvement would be able to attend Board meetings and their views sought. A role profile has been written and approved by the trustees.

To support an orderly transition and enable continuity Shadow Board members were canvassed to consider joining the CIO Board. New trustees will be appointed in 2025, followed by a skills audit to establish where the Board needs strengthening thereafter.

2.4 Governance Development

A major focus of the first year was building a governance framework capable of supporting a complex, multi-stakeholder marine environment. Key achievements included:

- **Establishing core governance policies**, including safeguarding, financial controls, conflicts of interest, data protection, environmental responsibility, and risk management.
- **Setting up a regular board meeting cycle**, with standardised reporting templates and clear decision-making protocols.
- **Creating a risk register**, reviewed quarterly, with particular attention to partnership dependencies, environmental risks, and early-stage organisational capacity.

Through 2025 we will be developing a scheme of delegation, clarifying the respective roles of trustees, staff, volunteers, and delivery partners and the appropriate financial controls and oversight.

This will ensure that governance is not only compliant but also proportionate, transparent, and aligned with the charity's long-term ambitions.

3. Objectives and Activities

The CIO's charitable objects focus on advancing environmental protection, promoting public engagement with the marine environment, supporting education and research, and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage of Plymouth Sound.

During this first year, activity centred on establishing the organisational infrastructure required to deliver these objects effectively. Key activities included:

- Developing the strategic framework for the National Marine Park.
- Building relationships with local authorities, academic institutions, community groups, and marine stakeholders.
- Supporting early-stage engagement activities to raise public awareness of the National Marine Park concept.
- Establishing operational systems, communication channels, and initial programme plans.
- Supporting delivery of the Horizons project

4. Achievements and Performance

Although the first year was primarily foundational, the trustees are pleased to report significant progress:

- The CIO is now fully operational with a clear governance structure.
- Key policies and procedures have been adopted and embedded.
- Early engagement activities have strengthened community understanding of the National Marine Park's purpose.
- Partnerships with local and national organisations have been formalised, supporting future programme delivery.
- The charity has begun shaping its long-term strategy for conservation, education, and public engagement.

5. Financial Review

The first year focused on governance and development. The CIO will be opening a bank account and beginning the process of securing funds.

6. Risk Management

Key risks identified during the first year included:

- Dependence on early-stage funding.
- The complexity of operating within a multi-stakeholder marine environment.
- Capacity constraints during start-up.
- Compliance risks associated with new systems and processes.

Mitigation measures include regular review of the risk register, clear delegation frameworks, strong partnership agreements, and ongoing trustee training.

8. Plans for Future Periods

In the coming year, the charity aims to:

- Expand programme delivery across conservation, education, and public engagement.
- Strengthen partnerships with local communities, academic institutions, and marine stakeholders.
- Grow the trustee board and volunteer base.
- Continue improving governance through periodic review and training.
- Secure sustainable funding to support long-term stewardship of Plymouth Sound.
- Continue support and involvement in [the](#) Horizons programme.

9. Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring the charity complies with charity law, maintains proper accounting records, and prepares an annual report and accounts in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102).

10. Approval

This report was approved by the trustees on **[Date]** and signed on their behalf by:



[Pamela Buchan](#)

Trustee of Plymouth Sound National Marine Park CIO