
BRITISH HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

(Registered Charity No. 205666)

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

Trustees' Annual Report
&
Receipts and Payments Accounts
for the year ended 31 December 2024

BRITISH HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

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Reference and administrative details

Charity Name: British Herpetological Society

Registered Charity Number: 205666

Principal Correspondence address: The British Herpetological Society
11, Strathmore Place
Montrose, Angus
DD10 8LQ
United Kingdom

Trustees

Dr Gerardo Garcia (President)
Mark Hollowell (Chair)
Michael Henry Wise (Treasurer)
Trevor Andrew Rose (Secretary)
Dr Simon Townson (Head of International Conservation & Captive Breeding Projects)
Dr Steven Allain (UK Conservation Officer)
Jennie Shea (Education and YH Officer)
Dr Christopher Gleed-Owen (Research Officer)
Paul Eversfield (Meetings organiser)
Dr Richard Hodges (Herpetological Bulletin Editor)
Suzanne Simpson (NatterJack Editor)
Stephen Copley
Dr. Marcio Pie (Herpetological Journal Editor- Resigned 2024)
Catherine Whatley (June 2024)
Maria Filippou (June 2024)
Katherine Mitchell (Communications Officer)
Vince Goodall
Dr Kevin Arbuckle (June 2024)
Prof Jelka Crnobrnja-Isailovic (June 2024)
Anna Maria-White (Sept 2024)
Erin Rickman-Hills (Nov 2024)

Bankers

National Westminster Bank PLC,
Leytonstone Branch,
694 High Road,
Leytonstone, E11 4TZ

Independent examiner

Charles Ssempijja, FCA
NfP Accountants Ltd
3rd Floor, 86-90 Paul Street, London EC2A 4NE

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Foreword

I am very pleased to report that 2024 has been another year of successfully increasing the Society's reach - through growing attendances at its meetings, conferences and in its online presence. The latter has become increasingly important in expanding our messaging, disseminating scientific updates and reporting on critical research findings. This includes making available all volumes and editions of the historic British Journal of Herpetology. More than 70 editions produced between 1949 and 1985 are now available as open access on our website following a major effort to scan and upload them.

The enhancements to our IT have enabled us to analyse trends across our online platforms more effectively, assisting us in shaping our planning activity. Via our publications, our meetings and conferences, our partnerships with other organisations and entities in the herpetological field, and our increasing influence and outreach, the Society continues to punch above its weight.

Our publications – the Herpetological Journal, the Herpetological Bulletin and the Natterjack (our periodic newsletter) – continued to be produced. BHS periodicals provide authors from within the herpetological field (both in the UK and abroad) with the opportunity to have their papers, submissions and manuscripts peer-reviewed. As a voluntary led organisation, this critical pathway could not be achieved without the dedicated time, effort and diligence of all our editors and associate editors.

Our annual conference in March representing the combined efforts of the BHS and AHH on Reptile and Amphibian Care and Breeding (held at Drayton Manor Resort) has become firmly established as a major, international event with speakers and delegates from Europe and the U.S. as well as the UK. Without the organisational support, credibility and IT platforms provided by the Society, this event could not happen.

The Society continued its heathland protection sponsorship, granting an additional £10,000 to enable the ARC to purchase another 26 acres of the Blackmoor SSSI in Hampshire (adding to the 50 acres of important heathland already secured), thereby significantly increasing the protection provided. This funding was made possible by the substantial legacy of the late Michael Warburg. We are also grateful for the legacy funds received from the estate of Ronald Ward-Howlett, a long-standing member of the BHS who listed herpetology as his main interest. We cannot overstate how very grateful we are for the legacies gifted to the Society which enable us to continue our important work. This includes £1,800 for six grants awarded in the year to a variety of research-oriented student projects continuing the Society's aim of supporting the work of young herpetologists.

At our AGM in June this year (reporting our 2024 operating performance), at the prestigious Manchester Museum, I was delighted to award the BHS Fellowship of the Society and Honorary Life Membership to Jan Clemons for her 30-year warriorship of UK Conservation. Many congratulations Jan and thank you for your unrelenting efforts.

I am immensely grateful to all our Trustees for the effort and time they commit on a purely voluntary basis to ensuring the Society remains valid and relevant and also to our partners, sponsors and supporters without whom the Society simply could not carry out its important work.

Mark Hollowell - Chair

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The trustees present their annual report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024. The reference and administrative information set out on page 3 forms part of this report. The Trustees have taken advantage of the smaller charities' exemption under Section 133 of the Charities Act 2011, and have prepared these accounts on a Receipts and Payments basis. Consequently, the charities reporting guidance and requirements under "Accounting and reporting by charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP)" are applied to only the Trustees' Annual Report.

Objectives and Activities

Summary of the objectives of the charity set out in its governing document:

The promotion of the study and protection of amphibians and reptiles in particular through scientific research, captive breeding and husbandry, conservation and fieldwork and education.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objectives:

Publications

The society produces and distributes regular herpetological publications to its members, who include both individuals and institutions in the UK and overseas. Membership is open to all and membership fees are modest. The society's publications also benefit the herpetological community at large by providing a platform for the publication of high-quality scientific research and disseminating new ideas and practices.

Meetings and Events

The Society organises and attends herpetological meetings, including both scientific meetings and meetings aimed at the lay enthusiast. The society also attends non-herpetological events with a view to educating the public about herpetofauna.

Grants

The Society makes grants for scientific research, conservation work, the protection and creation of reptile and amphibian habitats, conservation-related captive breeding activities, and the education of the public.

Herpetological Library

The Society owns a varied collection of herpetological books which provide useful reference information for herpetologists and other zoologists.

Public Benefit

The Society's Council of Trustees have borne in mind the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit while planning the Society's activities for the year. The Trustees consider that the Society's activities benefit the herpetological community in particular by providing services to it, and that they benefit the general public both by protecting British and other herpetofauna and by funding and facilitating scientific research.

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Policy on grant making

Grants made by the Society must be approved by the Council of Trustees, after due consideration of each application's merits. Progress in achieving the objectives of these grants is monitored by an allocated member of the Council of Trustees and reported to Council.

Contribution made by volunteers

The Society is run by unpaid volunteers (the Council of Trustees). Volunteers who are not members of the Council of Trustees also contribute to the Society's activities, including its conservation activities, the maintenance and running of the library, and attendance at events. Volunteers are entitled to claim expenses incurred in the course of these activities, subject to pre-approval by Council for substantial items. The Treasurer and Secretary are each entitled to claim an honorarium of £250 per annum, to compensate for the space taken up in their homes by the Society's records; the Treasurer and Secretary waived their honoraria this year. The Natterjack Editor also received an honorarium of £150 during the year, to reflect the hard work involved in producing the NatterJack.

Achievements and Performance

This summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifies how the work of the Charity has made a difference to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and wider benefits to society as a whole.

- Key to the continuing involvement of our members, individuals, families and institutions has been the publication of our scientific journals, the Herpetological Journal and the Herpetological Bulletin, and the Natterjack (our periodic newsletter). During 2024 a combined 12 editions were published and distributed across our extensive membership
- A major piece of work – scanning and uploading 70 editions of the British Journal of Herpetology (the forerunner of the current BHS Herpetological Journal) originally published by the Society between 1949 -1985 was completed, to make them available on the website as Open Access.
- In March the combined efforts of the BHS and AHH (Advancing Herpetological Husbandry) teams resulted in another very successful conference on Reptile and Amphibian Care and Breeding at Drayton Manor Resort. This conference has now become firmly established as a major, domestic and international event with speakers and delegates coming from Europe and the U.S. as well as the UK. Conceived in part as a forum to bring the private and professional keeping communities together, the conference provides a unique platform and forum for (typically 165+ attendees) sharing experiences, techniques and ideas in the sphere of herptile captive care over 2 days.

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- The Society saw a 50% increase in membership of Young Herpetologists (under 18) during the year – corresponding with our increased Social Media presence and reach to a younger audience. This membership cohort is strategically important for the continuance and growth of the Society and in promoting its aims.
- Our conservation work was also represented by the continuing promotion of our amphibian ladders – developed by our own Society Secretary as a solution to avoid the needless deaths of countless amphibians in drains and similar traps. The application of this small piece of equipment nationally and even internationally, continues to make inroads protecting breeding colonies on the move and where drainage and other infrastructure introductions encroach on amphibian territories.
- The Society's important conservation work (assisted by legacy funding) enabled a further purchase of 26 acres of the Blackmoor SSSI in Hampshire as part of the heathland protection sponsorship by ARC to add to the 50 acres of important heathland already secured. This action significantly increases the protection of this important site.
- A new "open access" publication offering periodic BHS Reports, developed by Dr Simon Townson (the Society's Head of Conservation and Captive Breeding Projects) was very well received. These popular reports - including a record of our annual Autumn meeting in Amersham alongside updates on our International Conservation activities and projects will now become a continuing feature of our work.
- The BHS Research Committee approved six student research grants in the 21st year of its operation. With grants of circa £300 – this initiative set up by the Society's Research Officer Dr Chris Gleed-Owen to help early-career herpetologists from around the world, opens to applications from students in June and December each year. BHS prioritises projects in developing countries, and particularly ones working with endangered species. During the year £1,800 of grants were awarded to projects including: the ecology of the Voiceless Reed Frog (newly discovered species in Tanzania), a freshwater turtle habitat study in Nepal and a population assessment of chameleons on Mount Lefo in Cameroon. Corporate sponsorship to support this important work is welcomed.
- The Society supported major events to encourage knowledge sharing and learning opportunities, including the ARC-BHS joint scientific meeting, Venom Day, the BHS/AHH annual confer-

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ence, the European Congress of Herpetology, and the BHS and Thames & Chiltern Herpetological Group Joint Meeting.

- A member survey carried out in-year which provided insightful results for driving our future priorities. 67% of respondents stated that they saw the Society's main objective as "producing scientific publications about herpetology" and almost half of respondents agreed joint objectives of "organising herpetological interest meetings and conferences, funding research about husbandry of captive reptiles, practical conservation events and campaigning".
- During the year the Society teamed up with "Tailored Branding" to give BHS members and supporters access to a range of branded clothing items, ensuring they represent and show their support for the Society during fieldwork, events, whatever they are doing and wherever they are going.

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Financial Review

Financial summary

In total the Society secured £39,678 (prior year: £32,433) of funding in the year, ending the year with total funds of £180,559 (prior year: £189,773), which is above its reserve requirement. Of the total funds at year end, £38,835 (prior year: £48,835) was restricted and £141,724 (prior year: £140,938) was unrestricted. The Trustees consider that the excess of current reserves over requirement is acceptable in order to eliminate concerns about the Society's ability to continue its activities in the short and medium term. The Trustees continue to monitor the Society's membership subscriptions to ensure its long-term viability given the changing patterns of membership. This included a membership survey during the year with reports to Council. Different strategies continue to be employed and membership stabilised in 2024

Reserves and reserves policy

The Trustees consider that the Society's current level of reserves is adequate, as its unrestricted funds are sufficient for a minimum of two years' non-discretionary expenditure (i.e. Memberships). The Society's policy is to hold sufficient unrestricted reserves to meet some 2 years of non-discretionary reserves. The Trustees consider that this is sufficient to enable the Society to discharge its obligations in the event of unexpected difficulties.

Going concern

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

Principal funding sources

The Society's principal source of funds is the subscription fees paid by its membership. These are supplemented by bequests/legacies and income from activities such as the sale of amphibian ladders and herpetological books. (All proceeds assist with advancing the Society's aims)

Investment policy

The Society's current policy is to hold the bulk of its funds in cash. The Council of Trustees has reviewed this policy and considered it prudent to continue at present, bearing in mind the significant uncertainty currently affecting both the UK and the global economy and the potential that it may need to release substantial funds for conservation land purchases in the near future.

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Risk Management

The principal financial risk facing the Charity is a fall in membership numbers and receipts to an unsustainable level; the Trustees believe the risk is largely from the threat of long-term societal changes. The matter of membership recruitment remains a key priority for Trustees

The trustees are continuing to mitigate this risk by developing other sources of income such as amphibian ladder sales, book sales, events income, and open access publishing fees. Additionally, active efforts to expand the Society's online footprint and engagement across all spheres of activity with the objective of encouraging and building membership have significantly increased during 2024.

The Society also holds insurance libel and slander claims, however the Trustees believe the risk of such an event is very low.

The first key reputational risk facing the Charity is the danger of inadvertently disseminating known falsehoods in its scientific publications. This risk is addressed by means of the peer review process, which seeks to ensure that the society only publishes material of acceptable quality.

The second key reputational risk facing the Charity is the danger of inadvertently promoting bad practise, in terms of either conservation or animal welfare. This risk is addressed by the expertise of the Society's board of Trustees, which includes eminent herpetologists, and by the society's funding model, whereby funds are raised directly from the public, thus ensuring it is not beholden to commercial or other concerns.

Structure, Governance and Management

Description of the charity's trusts:

Type of governing document:	Constitution dated March 2015
How the charity is constituted:	Registered charity (unincorporated)
Trustee selection methods:	Trustees may be temporarily co-opted by Council. All appointments are confirmed by a vote of the Society's members at the AGM.
Related parties:	The trustees and their close connections are considered to be the only related parties of the charity.

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Recruitment, appointment and induction of new trustees

Trustees are elected and co-opted under the terms of the Constitution. Regular reviews are held to identify any expertise gaps within the Board of Trustees and appointments are made where required to strengthen the Board of Trustees, subject to all Trustees' approval. When it is necessary to appoint new Trustees, due to either a Trustee stepping down or a gap of expertise in the Board being identified, recruitment begins through the networks of the Board and staff. Applicants' details are reviewed by Trustees, and selected applicants invited to observe a meeting and to attend an interview with the Chair of Trustees with at least one other Trustee. Upon a successful interview, the successful applicant is invited to join the Trustee Board.


The charity provides new Trustees with information about the charity, including the content of the Constitution and Rules. They are also directed to guidance on their legal obligations under charity law and the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit, and information updates are circulated to Trustees regularly.

Declarations

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)

	
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Full name(s)

Michael Henry Wise	
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Position (e.g. Secretary,
Chair, etc.)

Treasurer	
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Date

27/10/2025

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**Independent
examiner's report on
the accounts**



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Charity Name

British Herpetological Society

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31 December
2024

Charity no (if any)

205666

Set out on pages

13-14

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

**Respective
responsibilities of
trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act") and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of independent
examiner's statement**

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

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**Independent
examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention (other than that disclosed below)

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Acthave not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.(E.g. accounting records have not been kept in accordance with s132 of the Charities' Act 2011 and those accounts do not comply with the requirements of the 2008 Regulations setting out the form and content of charity accounts; any material expenditure or action which appears not to be in accordance with the trusts of the charity; any failure to be provided with information and explanations by any past or present trustee, officer or employee; and any material consistency between the accounts and the trustees' annual report.)

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

N/A

Signed:



Date:

28 October 2025

Name:

Charles Ssempijja

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

FCA, ICAEW

Address:


3rd Floor, 86-90 Paul Street, EC2A 4NE

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 CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES	Charity Name		No (if any)		CC16a
	British Herpetological Society		205666		
	Receipts and payments accounts				
	For the period from	Period start date	To	Period end date	
		01/01/2024		31/12/2024	
Section A Receipts and payments					
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Amphibian ladders	-	-	-	-	10
Books	108	-	-	108	128
Conservation	-	-	-	-	-
Events	14,862	-	-	14,862	10,392
Finance	1,114	-	-	1,114	1,306
Legacies	-	-	-	-	508
Memberships	23,405	-	-	23,405	20,089
Open Access publishing fees	189	-	-	189	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	39,678	-	-	39,678	32,433
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	39,678	-	-	39,678	32,433
A3 Payments					
Admin	954	-	-	954	2,838
Advocacy	300	-	-	300	500
Amphibian ladders	-	-	-	-	30
Books	11	-	-	11	12
Conservation grants	-	10,000	-	10,000	4,018
Events	14,295	-	-	14,295	14,955
IT	3,423	-	-	3,423	2,102
Memberships expenditure	18,109	-	-	18,109	15,952
Research	1,800	-	-	1,800	3,000
Sub total	38,892	10,000	-	48,892	43,408
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	38,892	10,000	-	48,892	43,408
Net of receipts/(payments)	786	(10,000)	-	(9,214)	(10,975)
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	140,938	48,835	-	189,773	200,748
Cash funds this year end	141,724	38,835	-	180,559	189,773

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 <div>CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES</div>	Charity Name British Herpetological Society			No (if any) 205666	CC16a
	Receipts and payments accounts				
	For the period from	Period start date 01/01/2024	To	Period end date 31/12/2024	

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	CAF cash Ed Comm	2,114	-	-
	CAF cash main	1,233	-	
	CAF gold main	70,463	-	
	Ed Comm Santander	1,735	-	
	Membership cards petty cash	30		
	Nat West main	11,683	38,835	
	Paypal	53,363	-	
	Treasurer's petty cash	41	-	
	Secretary petty cash	76	-	
	Ed Comm petty cash	985	-	
	Total cash funds	141,724	38,835	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Gift Aid claims outstanding:	6,083	-	-
	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets	Santander shares	Land Fund (restricted)	-	2,081
	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use		General (unrestricted)	-	-
	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	Independent Examiner's fee	General (unrestricted)	600	Less than 1 year

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	M H Wise	MH Wise	27/10/2025