

Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve
Annual report and financial statements
for the year ended 31 March 2025

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LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Charity registration number: 269535 (England and Wales)

Trustees

Barry Yates: Chairman
John Baker: Hon. Secretary
Alan Martin: Hon. Treasurer
Patrick Bonham: Membership Secretary
Claire Bayntun
David Bentley
Christine George
Stephen Masters
James Tomlinson
Linda Wren
Anne Yates

Independent examiner

Roy Holland BSc (Econ.), FCA
Holland Harper LLP
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Bankers

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Charity office

Rye Harbour Discovery Centre
Rye Harbour Road
Rye
East Sussex TN31 7FW

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

The Trustees of the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England & Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Trustees

Trustees are appointed by the Members and those who have served during the year are as follows

Dr Barry Yates: Chairman (appointed 12th October 2024)
John Baker: Hon. Secretary
Alan Martin: Hon. Treasurer
Patrick Bonham: Membership Secretary
Claire Bayntun
David Bentley
Catherine Emmitt (resigned 12th October 2024)
Christine George
Stephen Masters
James Tomlinson
Linda Wren
Anne Yates

Constitution and Objects

The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve is constituted by a Deed of Trust dated 31st May 1974 and is a charity registered in England and Wales, number 269535. The trustees shall hold the Trust Fund and its income upon trust to apply them for the following objectives:

- assisting the management of the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve through voluntary work and contributions.
- fundraising by way of subscription and activities and organising local publicity for the Nature Reserve.
- recruiting members to support the Nature Reserve.
- co-operating with other Local Bodies and Authorities and SWT taking all such other steps as may from time to time be necessary to preserve the interests of the Nature Reserve.
- to do all such things and to take all such measures as may be considered to be in the interest of the Nature Reserve at the discretion of the group and with the approval of the Management Committee and SWT or such other body as shall from time to time be responsible for the running of the Nature Reserve.

Review of developments, activities and achievements – Report for the year ended 31 March 2025

The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve had another encouraging year, reporting a financial surplus of income over expenditure of just £9,213. This surplus when added to the brought forward balance left the Friends at the end of the year with financial reserves of £712,818, of which £250,281 was in cash or deposit accounts.

Whilst membership income continues to be the largest source of income at £24,124 plus Gift Aid of £4,717, the charity also received legacies of £34,191 and general donations of a further £8,274. Sales of Friends badged items (such as the three books it has published, tea towels, coasters and greeting cards) sold primarily through the Discovery Centre and local shops, contributed a profit of £2,611. A further £2,892 was generated from a combination of sales from the Craft Group, second-hand books and donations made at the monthly talks held for members on the second Saturday of every month. The major expenditure in the year was the £74,343 donated to the Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT) towards salary costs and equipment for the reserve.

The Trustees met formally on seven occasions during the year in addition to the AGM in October, but were regularly in contact through less formal meetings and email correspondence in order to progress Friends business. Separate meetings were also held regularly with representatives of the SWT, both with regard to the ongoing management of the Nature Reserve but also to discuss the operation and development of the Discovery Centre. There was a field meeting with SWT directors and managers in June at another SWT reserve to foster good relationships, and the trustees were consulted and gave feedback on SWT's new management plan for the nature reserve. At the AGM Catherine Emmitt resigned as a trustee after serving for eight years, and a new Chairman, Dr Barry Yates was elected – he had retired as the SWT site manager in April 2023. This takes the total number of current trustees to eleven.

The number of members at the end of the year was 2,085 a slight increase from the previous year. Members receive three Newsletters a year with 1,020 being sent out electronically and 407 by second- class mail. Reducing the number of hard copy subscribers even further will reduce the

printing costs, and encouraging more members to sign up for Gift Aid will boost our income. With David Bentley as the new editor of the Newsletter and volunteer Victoria Pope as the new designer, the publication took on a new look that was well received by members. This new look was also reflected in new recruitment posters.

One of the most important opportunities to engage face to face with members is through the monthly 'Friends Days' which are held on the second Saturday of each month in the Discovery Centre. These days included a morning guided walk around the reserve and then an illustrated talk in the afternoon on topics of local wildlife or local history, with stalls of used books and the Friends craft group. There was also a monthly guided walk on a Sunday later in the month.

Many of the Friends committee and members are actively involved in supporting the work of SWT at the nature reserve by volunteering for them – one of these events is the monthly 'Guide in a Hide' that often enables 100-200 people to experience, perhaps for the first time, birds through binoculars and telescopes with the assistance of knowledgeable volunteers.

Projects supported during the year included the purchase of thermal imaging equipment to monitor the wildlife at night, repairs to a hide, and subsidising the costs to enable some smaller local schools to visit the reserve. The Friends also continued to provide financial support to cover the operational costs of the reserve and education team, which was especially important as the HLF funding for the Discovery Centre has now ended.

Since it was established in 1973, the Friends has always supported projects and work to improve special wildlife and to improve facilities for visitors. This has made an enormous difference to this special place and has only been possible through the support and encouragement of our members, to whom we extend our grateful thanks.

This contribution by many individuals over five decades was recently recognised. In November 2024 it was announced that the Friends had been awarded the King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS) and the presentation by the Lord Lieutenant was made to the group before an invited audience of fifty supporters in March 2025. Equivalent to an MBE, the KAVS is the highest award that can be given to a local voluntary group in the UK, and it is awarded for life. The crystal award and citation is on display at the Discovery Centre.

Whilst the ultimate responsibility for managing Rye Harbour Nature Reserve lies with the SWT, they can only provide the current level of reserve management, education work and visitor engagement with the support of the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve.

Review of financial transactions

The financial statements as set out on pages 7 to 12 summarise the transactions of the charity during the year ended 31 March 2025, at which date there was a surplus for the year of £9,213 (2024: a surplus of £147), which when added to the funds brought forward of £703,605 leaves total funds to be carried forward of £712,818.

Reserves policy

The trustees' policy is to maintain a level of reserves which will provide a stable base for its continuing activities while at the same time ensuring excessive funds are not accumulated. The trustees believe that the free reserves of £250,281 are sufficient for its current purposes and these are reviewed on a regular basis.

Risk Management

The trustees have examined the major strategic, business and operational risks which the charity faces and confirm that systems have been established to enable regular reports to be produced so that necessary steps can be taken to lessen these risks.

Public Benefit

The trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning future activities and setting grant making policies. They will only provide grants which clearly demonstrate public benefit.

Dr Barry Yates
Chairman

Alan Martin
Honorary Treasurer

2025

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve (the Trust) for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Respective Responsibilities of trustees and examiner

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 all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the 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 you as 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.

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 by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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.

Roy Holland BSc (Econ.), FCA

2025

Holland Harper LLP
Chartered Accountants

26 High Street, Battle
East Sussex TN33 0EA

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Note	2025 Total £	2024 Total £
Income from			
Membership subscriptions		24,124	24,569
Donations and legacies		42,465	18,967
Trading income		5,727	10,435
Gift Aid		4,717	4,854
Events		2,892	2,716
Interest		8,444	5,328
Other income		7,298	3,382
Total income		95,667	70,251
Expenditure on			
Nature reserve projects and salary contributions		74,343	38,182
Merchandise costs		3,116	7,076
Newsletters and leaflets		2,401	2,988
Legal and professional costs	7	2,313	3,719
Other expenses	7	4,215	18,079
Bank charges	7	66	60
Total expenditure		86,454	70,104
Net income/(expenditure)		9,213	147
Fund balances as at 1 April 2024		703,605	703,458
Property revaluation		-	-
Fund balances at 31 March 2025	6	712,818	703,605

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the period.

All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

The figures shown for both years are all unrestricted funds.

The notes on pages 11 to 14 form part of these financial statements.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH 2025

	Note	2025 Total £	2024 Total £
Fixed Assets			
Freehold property	2	450,000	450,000
Current assets			
Cash at bank		42,756	36,036
Deposit accounts		207,525	204,972
Trading stock	3	4,439	5,341
Debtors and prepayments	4	9,581	9,042
Total current assets		264,301	255,391
Creditors falling due within one year	5	(1,483)	(1,786)
Net current assets		262,818	253,605
Net assets		712,818	703,605
Fund balances	6	712,818	703,605

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue on behalf of the Board by:

Alan Martin
Honorary Treasurer

2025

The notes on pages 11 to 14 form part of these financial statements.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. Summary of significant accounting policies

1.1 Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's Deed of Trust, the Charities Act 2011, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019).

The financial statements have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in October 2019 rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, (modified to include the revaluation of freehold properties). The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The functional currency of the charity is £.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the Trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Income

1.3.1 Donations and gifts

Income is recognised in the year in which the charity is entitled to receipt and the amount can be measured with reasonable certainty.

1.3.2 Investment income

Investment income is accounted for on a receivable basis.

1.3.3 Volunteer time

No amount is included in the financial statements for volunteer time in line with the SORP.

1.3.4 Trading income

Income from trading activities includes income earned from fundraising events and trading activities to raise funds for the charity. Income is received in exchange for supplying goods and services in order to raise funds and is recognised when entitlement has occurred.

1.4 Expenditure

Expenditure is included on an accruals basis including irrecoverable VAT, and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

1.5 Taxation

The Trust is a registered charity and is not liable to United Kingdom income tax or corporation tax on charitable activities.

1.6 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

1.7 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of any impairment losses.

It is not considered necessary to depreciate the freehold property held which is instead shown at a valuation in the accounts.

1.8 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

2. Tangible fixed assets

At 31 March 2025, had the revalued asset been carried at historic cost, the carrying amount would have been £48,000 (2024 - £48,000). It was revalued to £450,000 in April 2023 by two Rye-based Estate Agents, Rush, Witt & Wilson and Phillips & Stubbs.

The revaluation surplus is disclosed in note 6.

Freehold, Land & Buildings	£
Cost or valuation	
At 1 April 2024	450,000
Revaluation	-
At 31 March 2025	450,000

3. Trading stocks

Stocks are stated at the lower of cost and estimated selling price less costs to complete and sell. Cost includes all costs of purchase, costs of conversion and other costs incurred in bringing stock to its present location and condition. Cost is calculated using the first-in, first-out formula. Provision is made for damaged, obsolete and slow-moving stock where appropriate.

	2025	2024
	£	£
Opening stock	5,341	3,140
Purchases	2,214	9,277
Less cost of sales	(3,116)	(7,076)
Closing stock	4,439	5,341

4. Debtors and prepayments

	2025	2024
	£	£
Other debtors and prepayments	4,883	4,207
Gift Aid	4,698	4,835
Total debtors and prepayments	9,581	9,042

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5. Creditors

	2025	2024
	£	£
Subscriptions paid in advance	483	786
Stock purchases	-	-
Independent examination fees	1,000	1,000
Total creditors	1,483	1,786

6. Fund balances

	Unrestricted Funds	Revaluation Reserve	Total
	£	£	£
At 1 April 2024	301,605	402,000	703,605
Surplus for the year	9,213	-	9,213
Land and buildings revaluation	-	-	-
At 31 March 2025	310,818	402,000	712,818

7. Running costs

	2025	2024
	£	£
Independent examination fees	900	900
Insurance	1,413	1,819
Professional fees	-	1,000
Watch Cottage refurbishment	1,010	17,301
Other costs	3,205	778
Bank charges	66	60
Total costs	6,594	21,858

Running costs of the charity include governance costs and general administration. The Trustees, who are considered to be key management personnel, received no remuneration or expenses during the year (2024: £Nil).

8. Related party transactions

There have been no transactions with related parties during the year (2024: none).