

THE WILD FLOWER SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 271694

Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2023

Reference and Administrative Details

Name: The Wild Flower Society

Charity registration number: 271694

Contact address: 32 Ashfield Road, London, N14 7JY

Membership administration: 43 Roebuck Road, Rochester, Kent, ME1 1UE

Website address: www.thewildflowersociety.org.uk

The following were members of the Executive Committee and the charity trustees at the date of approval of this Report.

President: Professor Sir Ghilleen Prance

Chairman: Dr Peter Llewellyn

General Secretary: Mrs Sheila Wynn

Treasurer: Mr Robin Blades

Editor: Mr Kenneth Southall

Publicity Secretary: Dr Nichola Hawkins

Meetings Secretary: Mrs Janet John

General members of the Executive Committee: Dr Helen Dignum, Mrs Barbara Lewis, Mr Steven Little, Mrs Fay Banks.

Dr Anne Kell and Mrs Pauline Wilson were trustees until 2 September 2023. Mr Kenneth Southall and Mrs Fay Banks became trustees on 2 September 2023. The remaining people listed above were trustees throughout the year ended 31 December 2023.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Wild Flower Society was established in 1886 as an unincorporated association of people interested in the study and recording of wild flowers in the United Kingdom. In 1979 it was re-established as a registered charity with Aims and Rules approved by the Charity Commission. The Aims and Rules is its Governing Document.

Membership of the Society is open to all who support its aims.

The management of the affairs of the Society is in the hands of the Executive Committee consisting of up to seven officers of the Society, who are all elected or re-elected annually at the Annual General Meeting, together with four other members similarly elected, one of whom retires each year by rotation. The members of the Executive Committee are the Trustees of the charity under the Charities Act 2011.

The organisation of the affairs of the Society, supervised by the Executive Committee, is based on a network of branches distributed throughout the United Kingdom, each with a Branch Secretary, who is an experienced field botanist who can help and encourage members in that part of the country. There are also two national branches for members who have recorded more than 2000 plant species and one for junior members.

All the officers of the Society are honorary. The administration of the membership subscriptions and records is looked after by Mrs Sue Poyser, our Membership Secretary in an honorary capacity.

Financial Review

Total receipts for the year ended 31 December 2023 exceeded payments by £3543 compared with excess payments of £4238 in 2022. The main reason for the excess receipts was a very generous legacy of £10,000 from a late member, Mr David Albon. Grant expenditure increased again to £8550 which is similar to pre-pandemic levels.

Investments are held in the CCLA COIF Charities Deposit, Short Duration Bond and Investment Funds, BLK Charities UK Bond Fund and M & G Charibond Charities Fixed Interest Fund. This gives the Society exposure to a mixture of cash deposits, government and corporate bonds and equities. The value of the holding in the COIF Charities Investment Fund, which is largely based on equities, improved during the year; the investments based on bonds remain below their previous values. Overall the value of the investments at 31 December 2023 was 8.3% higher than their value at 31 December 2022.

Reserves policy. The Society has no permanent endowment funds. The Society's policy is to spend its income funds received in most years. It also proposes to spend £10,000 brought forward from the period 2018-22 and a legacy of £10,000 received in 2023 over the period 2023-27. The Society holds other sums of around £150,000 which are invested to provide income to be spent on its charitable purposes. It intends to spend up to 2% of its investments each year on its charitable purposes. This policy is due for review by March 2028 and will be reviewed if further large legacies or donations are received.

Public Benefit

The Trustees have complied with their duty under section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to pay regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in deciding what activities the Society should undertake. The Society has continued to benefit the public by encouraging the advancement of education and the advancement of environmental protection and improvement.

Objectives and Activities

The aims of the Society are:

- a) to promote a greater knowledge of field botany among the general public and in particular among young people;
- b) to advance education in matters relating to the conservation of wild flowers and the countryside;
- c) to promote the conservation of the British flora.

The Society pursues its aims by offering membership to the public, by making grants to other organisations and by making information about British wild flowers available to all on its website. Membership is open to all who wish to learn about field botany, on payment of an annual subscription which during 2023 was £10 for adults or £3 for juniors. It was agreed at the 2022 AGM that the subscription will be increased from 2024 onwards to £15 for adults and £5 for juniors, the first increase for over twenty years. We are grateful to Mrs Sue Poyser for her very efficient administration of our membership records.

The grants are made particularly to assist with the running of and participation in training courses relating to wild flowers. Knowledge of how to identify plants accurately is essential as a basis for their conservation. The grants also support research including detailed work monitoring rare plants in upper Teesdale, one of the areas of the country with the highest concentration of unusual species.

Members of the Society are encouraged to record the plants they see each year in Field Botanist's Record Books and send details to the Branch Secretaries. The Society runs a range of botanical recording projects for members; these include 1km and 10km studies for all plants found growing wild within a 1 km or 10km square of the national grid, spring and autumn hunts, records of plants flowering in winter and a photographic competition.

A magazine which is produced four times a year records and discusses the activities in the various branches, largely based on the Record Books and reports sent in by members and summarised by the Branch Secretaries. Other items include articles on plant identification and reports of field meetings. E-mailed information is sent to members at almost 650 addresses but this may include more than one address for some members.

Field meetings are arranged in various locations throughout the British Isles led by experienced and enthusiastic botanists. These allow participants to learn more about the identification, habitats and conservation of wild flowers and ferns. Botanists of all abilities are welcome to attend but some meetings are particularly designed for relative beginners.

We reach a wider audience than our membership through Facebook on which we have over 4000 followers, X (formerly Twitter) on which we have over 3150 followers and Instagram on which we have are approaching 1000 followers. We have over 340

subscribers on YouTube. Our website provides information about wild flowers and an introduction to the Society for the general public. It also allows online payment of subscriptions.

Achievements and Performance

The Society continued its work through activities for members and its grant-making programme. Total membership at 31 December 2023 was 738 (744 at 31 December 2022). An extensive programme of field meetings was held. Eleven two-day or longer and around forty seven one-day meetings were held. These covered some of the most famous areas in the country for rare plants: the Lizard in Cornwall, Upper Teesdale in County Durham where we support the research programme begun by Dr Margaret Bradshaw, who led part of the visit, and Caenlochan in the Scottish Highlands. Members in most parts of England would have been able to find a meeting to allow them to learn about special plants and habitats near to them and there were also meetings in Wales and Scotland.

Online meetings in the first and last months of the year allowed us to range even more widely, including the Amazon rainforest thanks to our President, Sir Ghilleen Prance, a leading expert on its flora, as well as places closer to home.

The Society's annual Members' Weekend was based at Rye in Sussex in September and was well attended. It included field trips, where members were able to learn particularly about the plants growing on the shingle at Rye Harbour, Dungeness and elsewhere, the Society's AGM, a meeting for trustees and branch secretaries, plant identification quizzes and a talk on the flowers of the Isles of Scilly.

The Society made grants of £8550 to further its aims in 2024. Research supported included the work in Teesdale mentioned above, projects on limestone pavements, heathland management, pollination on the machair grassland of the Outer Hebrides and Yellow Bird's-nest, a species which does not produce its own chlorophyll. We have supported Wildlife Trusts around the country in running plant identification courses for their volunteers and, a more recent innovation, events to encourage an interest in plants among children and young people. There was good take up of our bursaries for young people attending plant identification courses run by the Field Studies Council.

We are grateful to all those who have contributed during the year. Dr Anne Kell had been Editor of the Society's Magazine since 2016. She increased the number of annual issues from three to four and made a number of valuable innovations in the content and production of the Magazine. Her efforts are much appreciated.

Report approved by the Executive Committee on 7 March 2024 and authorised to be signed on its behalf by R. A. Blades, Hon. Treasurer.

THE WILD FLOWER SOCIETY

(Registered Charity No 271694)

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

2022	Unrestricted Funds	2023
£	1. General Fund	£
	Operational receipts	
7591	Subscriptions	7401
510	Donations	782
500	Diaries and Badges	349
<u>1373</u>	Gift Aid	<u>1455</u>
<u>9974</u>		<u>9987</u>
	Investment Income	
2	Bank Interest	10
<u>1961</u>	Dividends	<u>2118</u>
<u>1963</u>		<u>2128</u>
	Other Receipts	
3000	Sale of Investments	-
-	Legacies	10000
588	Sale of Donated Books	171
<u>235</u>	Annual General Meeting	<u>1110</u>
<u>3823</u>		<u>11281</u>
15760	Total Receipts	23396

2022	Payments	2023
£	Operational Expenditure	£
7253	Magazine	7941
1287	Printing, Postage & Stationery	1659
<u>302</u>	Field Meetings	<u>252</u>
<u>8842</u>		<u>9852</u>
	Other Expenditure	
393	Annual General Meeting	1255
959	Travel Expenses	975
536	Insurance	582
4632	Website	606
101	Miscellaneous	250
129	Bank account & Stripe fees	145
<u>3636</u>	Transfer to G & D Fund	<u>4650</u>
<u>10386</u>		<u>8463</u>
<u>19228</u>	Total Expenditure	<u>18315</u>
3468	Net Receipts (2022 Payments)	5081
-		
	Bank and Deposit Balances 31 December 2023	7829
	Bank and Deposit Balances 31 December 2022	<u>2748</u>
	Net Receipts	5081

2022	2. Grants and Development Fund	2023
£	Receipts	£
14	Deposit Interest	137
2216	Investment Income	2225
<u>3636</u>	Transfer from General Fund	<u>4650</u>
5866		7012
	Payments	
<u>6636</u>	Grants	<u>8550</u>
<u>6636</u>		<u>8550</u>
770	Net Payments	1538
	Deposit Balances 31 December 2023	654
	Deposit Balances 31 December 2022	<u>2192</u>
	Net Payments	1538

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

		General Fund	Grants & Development Fund	Total
2022	1. Monetary Assets			2023
	Bank & Deposit Balances			
£		£	£	£
2748	Bank	7829	-	7829
2192	Deposits (COIF)	-	654	654
<u>4940</u>		<u>7829</u>	<u>654</u>	<u>8483</u>
	Others			
360	AGM weekend prepayments	63		63
	Income Tax claim on			
1485	Gift Aid (estimate)	1470		1470
<u>1845</u>		<u>1533</u>		<u>1533</u>
	2. Liabilities			
-		-		-
	3. Other Assets			
	Investments at			
143600	Market Value	74449	81045	155494
<u>150385</u>	Total Net Assets	<u>83811</u>	<u>81699</u>	<u>165510</u>

The accounts were approved by the Executive Committee on 7 March 2024 and authorised to be signed on its behalf by R. A. Blades, Hon. Treasurer.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. Accounting Principles

The accounts are drawn up in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 for smaller charities. They consist of a Receipts and Payments Account and a Statement of Assets and Liabilities. The Receipts and Payments Account reflects only amounts actually received and paid in cash during the year and does not include any amounts outstanding or accruals at the year end.

2. Grants and Development Fund

Grants made during 2023 were as follows:	£
Teesdale flora research	1000
Wildlife Trust training events	3650
Wildlife Trusts – work with young people	1750
Lancaster University – limestone pavement research	250
Manchester Met. University – heathland research	250
University of Glasgow – pollination on machair	250
Yellow Bird's-nest research	250
Publication of children's book 'Wonderweeds'	250
Field Studies Council bursaries	<u>900</u>
	8550

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT ON THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

As the charity's trustees within the terms of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) the Executive Committee is responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the 2011 Act and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act, to follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commission and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention. My examination of the accounts has been 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 the trustees concerning any such matters.

In connection with my examination no matter has come to my attention:

- 1) Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements have not been met to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and to prepare accounts which accord with the records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act.
- 2) To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

R. F. Holder, Hon. Independent Examiner,
339 Maidenhead Road, Windsor, Berkshire, SL4 5SE
26 April 2024

TREASURER'S REPORT

Total receipts for the year ended 31 December 2023 exceeded payments by £3543 compared with an excess of payments of £4238 in 2022. The main reason was a very generous legacy from our late member David Albon. The figures for most other sources of income were similar to 2022. Both income and expenditure relating to the AGM weekend were higher because of sums paid by members for lunches and donations to reserves visited. Website expenditure returned to a business as usual level.

Grant expenditure increased to our pre-pandemic level. We spent more on our two main ways of encouraging interest in plants among young people: bursaries for young participants at Field Studies Council courses and Wildlife Trust events directed at children. Our longstanding support for Wildlife Trust training events for adults and research on the Teesdale flora both continued. We also supported studies of plants on limestone pavement and upland heaths, pollination on the machair grassland in the Hebrides and the unusual saprophytic plant Yellow Bird's-nest. Our investments increased in value by 8.3% as equity markets recovered some of their fall in 2022.

R. A. Blades, Hon. Treasurer, 32 Ashfield Road, London, N14 7JY
7 March 2024

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