

**WOOLSTON EYES CONSERVATION GROUP
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022**



Reference and administrative details

Name of charity: Woolston Eyes Conservation Group

Charity registration number: 700362

Mailing address: WECG, 9 Lynton Gardens, Appleton, Warrington WA4 5ED

Website: www.woolstoneyes.com

Independent examiner: Steve Williams, 90 Edward Gardens, Woolston, Warrington, WA1 4QT

Trustees, Officers and Group Members

The Woolston Eyes Conservation Group is a charity registered with the UK Charity Commission (no. 700362). It was formed with an agreed constitution in 1978.

WECG is managed by a committee which comprises up to 12 members who elect trustees and officers at an Annual General Meeting

B Ankers Chairman and Trustee

D Bowman Vice-chairman and Trustee

B Martin Recorder and Trustee

D Spencer Treasurer and Secretary

J Blundell Committee Member

D Hackett Committee Member

J Haddock Committee Member

S Haddock Committee Member

A Mansfield Committee Member

D Owen Committee Member

H Wynn Committee Member

Objectives and Activities

The purpose of the Woolston Eyes Conservation Group (WECG) is to maintain and enhance the environment of the Woolston Eyes deposit grounds which are owned and managed by Peel Holdings/Manchester Ship Canal Company (the owners). The deposit grounds are classified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

WECG's main activities are:

1. Habitat Management:

Woolston Eyes SSSI is a nationally important site for its breeding bird assemblage of lowland open waters and their margins, including nationally important numbers of Black-necked Grebe, Gadwall and Pochard. Approximately 25% of the UK population of Black-necked Grebes breed at Woolston. In addition to its ornithological interest, Woolston Eyes is also Cheshire's premier butterfly site with large numbers of wider countryside species occurring along with notable assemblages of common amphibians.

2. Data Collection

- 3.
4. The members and permit holders collect data on the fauna and flora of the site by:
5.
 - Monthly Wetland Bird Surveys from September to April
 - Breeding Bird Surveys between March and July.
 - Bird ringing on Deposit Beds 1 and 3 carried out throughout the year by members of the Merseyside Ringing Group.
 - Regular surveys of butterflies and dragonflies.
 - Occasional surveys of other flora and fauna types, such as moths, beetles, wildflowers and fungi

The data collected is used by the WECG to guide habitat management activity and by Natural England when re-designation of the SSSI status occurs. It also informs the relationship with the owners to ensure that the quality of the habitat is maintained.

6. Visitor Access

The WECG facilitate access to the Reserve by managing a permit system on behalf of the owners. We also provide facilities so that visitors can observe and enjoy the wildlife.

7. Permit holders pay an annual fee for access to the Reserve of £15 per annum for an individual permit and £25 per annum for a family permit.
- 8.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Habitat management

The highlight of the year has been the completion of work, funded by Natural England, on No.4 bed to create a major new wetland. Both cells are filling with water and the new habitat is already attracting a large number of birds. Even before the work was complete several species of wader bred/attempted to breed on the raised islands. The wetland also attracted some very scarce species including White-tailed Plover (the first record in Cheshire), Penduline Tit (the second Cheshire record) and Temminck's Stint.

None of the above could have been achieved without the help of so many people and organisations. First and foremost, our thanks must go to Peel Ports and Peel

Holdings, without whose consent and support Woolston Eyes as a Nature Reserve simply would not exist. In addition, we are very grateful for the unstinting technical support and advice we have received from the RSPB and NE, which have played a major part in delivering the improvements to the habitat we have seen in recent years.

In addition to these new developments a large amount of the more routine habitat management work has taken place throughout the year which has focused on reed restoration, tree coppicing and maintenance of our grasslands. This work is carried out by RSPB wardens funded by WECG.

Annual Report

We published a report on the fauna and flora recorded on the Reserve in 2021. We are very grateful to wildlife artist Colin Woolfe who illustrates our front cover; this year's painting was of one of pair of Marsh Harriers and celebrated the first time the species had bred on the Reserve. The report for 2022 sightings is currently in preparation and will be published in 2023.

Fauna and flora reports from previous years can be found via our website www.woolstoneyes.com. In addition, all the data collected on birds, butterflies and dragonflies are entered into RECORD, a biodiversity information system serving Cheshire, Halton, Warrington and Wirral.

Visitor Access

There was a continuing strong demand for permit sales and approximately 750 permits were sold this year. We are grateful to our permit holders, whose positive support we greatly value and whose permit fees help to fund the habitat management work and provision of visitor facilities, which are at the centre of our committee's activities.

With the lifting of all COVID restrictions we were able to welcome visiting groups back to the Reserve. We have strong demand for group visits by organisations such as bird clubs, RSPB groups and the U3A.

A new viewing platform, partially funded by Natural England, was constructed on No.4 bed and allows visitors panoramic views of the newly created wetland.

FINANCIAL RESULTS

In 2022 £20,676 was raised from the sale of permits including Gift Aid compared to £20,786 in 2021. reflecting the continuing support from our permit holders.

£128,1149 was received from our Countryside Stewardship capital grant for the completion of the new wetland on No.4 bed. Additionally, Countryside Stewardship grants, totalling £35,447 were received for habitat management

work on No.3 and No.4 beds. A grant of £9,000 was also received from Natural England as a contribution towards the construction of the new platform on No.4 bed.

The major expenses during the year have been costs of the RSPB wardening services which amount to approximately £40,000 and the contractor costs for the development of No.4 bed which total £108,000. Other significant expenditures have been the No.4 bed platform (total cost £25,475 including the contribution from Natural England), ~£4,000 on a campaign of Giant Hogweed spraying on No.4 bed and the purchase of an ISO container (£3,000) for the storage of equipment on No.4 bed.

The accounts show that we remain in a sound financial position. At the end of 2022 we have £165,831 cash in the bank. We owe an estimated £119,000 to the RSPB for their services between 2016 to 2022 and allowing for this and other accruals, we have surplus funds of approximately £46,831 at the end of 2022. This is a decrease from 2021 when our surplus was £67,000, reflecting the significant one-off expenditures which have occurred in 2022.

The group's policy is to hold a surplus of at least £20k which would be intended to deal with any significant unplanned expenditure on our equipment or hides. As the committee comprises all volunteers our financial commitments are relatively small and the committee considers a £20k surplus sufficient to cover any financial risk.

B Ankers Chairman



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Woolston Eyes Conservation Group

No 700362

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

Period start date
01/01/2022


To

Period end date
31/12/2022

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Gift Aid	3,418	-	-	3,418	3,168
Permits, etc.	18,865	-	-	18,865	19,140
Donations	1,261	-	-	1,261	487
Misc	189	-	-	189	210
Rural Payment Agency	-	35,447	-	35,447	31,422
No.4 Bed Wetland Development Phase 2	-	128,114	-	128,114	307,080
Countryside Stewardship Grant	-	9,000	-	9,000	-
NE grant for No.4 platform	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	23,733	172,561	-	196,294	361,507
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	23,733	172,561	-	196,294	361,507
A3 Payments					
Admin & Insurance	5,861	-	-	5,861	4,831
Reserve Management	15,246	-	-	15,246	3,812
Bird Food	1,574	-	-	1,574	1,472
Miscellaneous Expenses	852	-	-	852	177
No.4 Bed Phase 2	-	108,000	-	108,000	218,513
No.4 Bed Platform	16,745	9,000	-	25,745	-
RSPB wardening fees	-	47,000	-	47,000	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	40,278	164,000	-	204,278	228,805
A4 Asset and investment purchases. (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	40,278	164,000	-	204,278	228,805
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 16,545	8,561	-	- 7,984	132,702
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	79,901	93,914	-	173,815	41,113
Cash funds this year end	63,356	102,475	-	165,831	173,815

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	Current	5,249	-	-
	Countryside Stewardship	-	3,599	-
	Savings	58,107	98,876	-
	Total cash funds	63,356	102,475	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
	Hides		-	-
	Storage Units		-	-
	Enviroloo		-	-
	Tractor		-	-
	Miscellaneous Equipment		-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
	Amount due to the RSPB for waerdening services	Restricted and Unrestricted	119,000	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees		Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
			B Ankers	22/02/2023

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of Woolston Eyes Conservation Group

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Woolston Eyes Conservation Group for the year ended 31 December 2022

Responsibilities and basis of the report.

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.

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

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: Stephen Williams

Address: 90 Edward Gardens, Woolston, Warrington, WA1 4QT

Date: 22/2/2023