

WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE LINK
(A company limited by guarantee)

UNAUDITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014

WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE LINK
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**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014**

Trustees

Amy Coyte, Chair
Jeremy Biggs, Deputy Chair (resigned 10 December 2014)
David Lind, Treasurer
Sue Armstrong-Brown (resigned 10 December 2014)
Nicola Hutchinson
Helen Meech (resigned 10 December 2014)
Paul Miner
Hazel Norman
Nikki Williams (appointed 10 December 2014)
Marcus Gilleard (appointed 18 March 2015)

Company registered number

03889519

Charity registered number

1107460

Registered office

89 Albert Embankment
London
SE1 7TP

Company secretary and Director

Elaine King

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS
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Administrative details (continued)

Independent Examiner

Simon Erskine FCA FCIE DChA
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Chartered Accountants
New Bridge Street House
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London
EC4V 6BJ

Bankers

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Nationwide International
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Douglas
Isle of Man
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Solicitors

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TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2014

The Trustees submit their report together with the financial statements of Wildlife and Countryside Link for the year ended 31 December 2014.

Structure, governance and management

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 7 December 1999 and registered as a charity on 5 January 2005.

The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. In 2007 the Memorandum and Articles of Association were reviewed, both to ensure compliance with the Companies Act (2006) and Charities Act (2006), and following a number of years using the previous Memorandum and Articles of Association which had raised the need for further clarification. Under those Articles, the members of the Board of Trustees are elected by a postal vote in advance or by secret ballot at the Annual General Meeting. Members of the Board of Trustees must retire at the third Annual General Meeting after that at which he or she was first elected, and are eligible for re-election for a further term ending on the sixth Annual General Meeting after their first election. The Treasurer must retire at the Annual General Meeting every three years but may stand for re-election with no maximum term of office.

Objectives and activities

Wildlife and Countryside Link (Link) brings together environmental voluntary organisations in the UK united by their common interest in the conservation and enjoyment of the natural and historic environment. Our aim is to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the voluntary sector through collaboration. We have 45 member organisations which collectively employ 11,000 full-time staff, have the help of 175,000 volunteers in the UK and the support of over 8 million people.

Established in 1980, Link exists to further the conservation, protection and enhancement of wildlife and landscape and to further the quiet enjoyment and appreciation of the countryside by the public by facilitating collaboration between voluntary organisations in the UK. It does this in the following ways:

- Providing secretariat support for working groups addressing a range of policy issues
- Convening and coordinating meetings with statutory conservation agencies, ministers, Government officials and other stakeholders
- Coordinating members' representation on external fora
- Preparing and advocating key policy messages
- Organising events such as seminars and conferences on specific policy areas
- Facilitating exchange of information and ideas between members
- Representing Link and its members to external bodies including Government and other stakeholders

Statement of public benefit

The Trustees of Wildlife and Countryside Link confirm that the organisation has Charitable Purposes pursuant to the Charities Act 2006. The Trustees believe that there are clear and identifiable public benefits arising from the pursuit of Wildlife and Countryside Link's aims and objectives, and that these benefits are freely available to the general public without restriction.

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Link Strategy 2015-2019

For some time, Link has recognised the need to adapt and evolve in response to a changing political and financial environment. In particular, the recession has had a major impact on many of our member organisations, for some resulting in reduced staffing levels and the associated loss of expertise and capacity. For others, the period has seen growth in terms of staff capacity and other resources, with 32 of Link's 44 members reporting increased incomes in 2013, compared to the previous year.

In addition, the political environment is increasingly volatile, with a major challenge being the Government's focus on growth and public spending reductions, often at the expense of the natural environment. At the same time, the natural environment is in crisis, with species and habitats declining at an alarming rate.

In 2014, Link therefore completed a strategic review of the organisation, which explored how Link can most effectively continue to provide a powerful collective voice for the natural environment, while also delivering added value to its members and ensuring the organisation's resilience and financial security.

Link's new strategy 2015-19 is the product of consultation with member organisations and a thorough review of Link's internal and external environment. Our vision is 'together to secure and shape a healthy, enhanced and accessible natural world'. And our ambition for Link is clear - to be a powerful, credible and effective voice for the natural environment, delivering influence and impact, while enhancing our delivery of clear added value to our members' work.

By 2019, we will have built on, and strengthened, what is already good at Link. By increasing our capacity and competence, we will have increased our engagement, influence and impact with Government. We will have enhanced the delivery and impact of our policy work and have delivered bold and powerful campaigns. We will have set the agenda and reacted only when we can add significant value to members' work. And we will have introduced new ways of working so that, when we do need to react, we are fleet of foot and respond quickly to fast-moving developments. All these activities will have been supported by governance arrangements that are fit for purpose and a clear and effective communications strategy.

We will also have a reputation amongst members for delivering clear value for money through a professional team that provides support, advice and leadership. And, having listened carefully to our members, we will manage with sensitivity the inevitable conflicts that arise between members' varying interests.

We will have diversified our sources of income, to reduce our dependence on members' subscriptions and donations, but while maintaining our members at the heart of what we do and how we do it. And we will have ensured that Link is financially sustainable in the long term. Link will also have more members and secure financial support from a range of other sources.

In order to realise our ambition for Link towards 2019, we will work to four strategic objectives. These strategic objectives will form the framework for Link's enhanced approach:

- 1: Increase and focus Link's influence and impact**
- 2: Strengthen our network of relationships and communications**
- 3: Increase members' capacity and consolidate our membership**
- 4: Grow our capability and establish our financial resilience**

In delivering Link's four strategic objectives, the organisation's value to members will be two-fold: we will deliver the leadership to support our members to have impact and influence at the highest level, while simultaneously providing a professional, highly skilled secretarial service.

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We will do this by:

Leadership

- Horizon scanning, gathering intelligence and proactively advising and supporting members
- Developing networks of relationships which help us deliver impact for members
- Delivering focused campaigns and advocacy messages that, when working together with members, will have the most impact, for example by implementing powerful 'set pieces' of work, such as Link's Nature Check report

Support

- Collaborating with members to develop strong and influential joint policies
- Facilitating the sharing of information and intelligence
- Advising and supporting working groups which address a range of policy issues
- Providing an accessible and safe place for identifying and ironing-out tensions, and developing joint policies and advocacy plans

AGM and annual debate

Link's Annual General Meeting took place on 10 December 2014 at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust's London Wetland Centre, Barnes. The day also included a Working Group Chairs and Vice Chairs meeting, addressing Link's priorities for 2015.

The AGM included formal adoption of Link's new Strategy 2015-2019. It also saw the appointment of Nikki Williams (Head of Campaigning at the Woodland Trust), as an Ordinary Trustee. Following the AGM, Link hosted a debate entitled "Critically endangered: How do we protect the spirit of the Habitats and Birds Directives?"

Link was pleased to welcome Dr Micheal O'Briain, Deputy Head of the Nature Unit, DG Environment, European Commission. Dr O'Briain is leading the Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT) of EU Nature Legislation, including the Habitats and Birds Directives. In a thought-provoking and valuable presentation and Q&A session, Dr O'Briain described the REFIT process, outlined the current timetable and discussed how Link members can engage with the Commission's consultation. Kate Jennings, chair of Link's Habitats and Birds Task and Finish Group, also presented an outline of members' current views on the Directives and the proposed REFIT process.

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Ways of working in 2014

In 2014 Link provided support for nine groups on the following policy areas:

- Agriculture: Chair, Abi Bunker (RSPB); Vice Chair, Helen Perkins (The Wildlife Trusts)
- Joint Links Habitats and Birds Task and Finish Group: Chair, Kate Jennings (RSPB)
- Land Use Planning: Victoria Bankes-Price (Woodland Trust); Vice Chair, Brendan Costelloe (RSPB)
- Legal Strategy: Chair, Matt Shardlow (Buglife); Vice Chair, Carol Day (RSPB)
- Marine: Chair, Joan Edwards (The Wildlife Trusts); Vice Chair, Melissa Moore (Marine Conservation Society)
- Water: Chair, Janina Gray (Salmon and Trout Association); Vice Chair, Kathy Hughes (WWF-UK)
- Whales: Chair, Jenny Lonsdale (Environment Investigation Agency) ; Vice Chair, John Frizell (Greenpeace)
- Wildlife Trade: Chair, Heather Sohl (WWF-UK); Vice Chair, Tania McCrea-Steele (IFAW)
- Natural Values: Chair, Frances Winder (Woodland Trust); Vice Chair, Paul Wilkinson (The Wildlife Trusts)
- Invasive Non-Native Species: Chair, Kay Haw (Woodland Trust)

Progress towards Link's strategic objectives 2010 – 2015

Link's strategic objectives for 2010 – 2015 comprised five 'policy' objectives that represent the collective aims of our members, and four 'service' objectives which we are pursuing as a membership organisation. These objectives will be represented in 2015-19 by the set of four enhanced strategic objectives.

1. To present an integrated vision for sustainable land and water use that promotes effective mechanisms for supporting landscape-scale natural and historic environment conservation

Link is committed to an integrated vision for sustainable land and water use, and has pursued a variety of mechanisms for achieving this.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is the biggest single lever for delivering environmental enhancement in the UK and, for some years, Link has undertaken an active advocacy programme in this area. This work is led by our **Agriculture Working Group (AWG)**, which has a long-standing commitment to reform the CAP to become a European Sustainable Land Management system.

In 2014 the AWG largely focused its efforts on advocacy around the final CAP implementation decisions, along with intelligence sharing and proactive planning. In particular, the group developed its policies and advocacy messages to enable it to play a more substantive role in influencing the CAP in the longer term in Westminster and in Brussels. This focus on internal planning resulted in the decision to develop a new vision for the future of farming to act as a 'calling card' for Government and other stakeholders of the food and farming system.

Throughout the year, Link was represented on and attended meetings of the Pesticides Forum, Direct Payments Consultative Group and the Rural Development Programme for England Programme Monitoring Committee. Link was previously a member of the Farm Visits Stakeholder Group but in 2014 moved to engage directly with Defra, hosting meetings that were more focussed and addressed issues more directly relevant to members, thus adding value to both members and government.

Advocacy work included a letter from Link chief executives, to the Secretary of State, reinforcing the need for a more targeted approach to the New Environment Land Management Schemes, to maximise benefit for wildlife, the countryside and society. In the subsequent response, Link was provided with reassurance that the new scheme will focus on providing genuine environmental benefits and better value for taxpayers' money.

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Link's **Habitats and Birds Task and Finish Group** was set up in December 2011 when the Chancellor initiated the England review of the Directives. The group was reactivated in July 2014 after the announcement of the review of regulatory fitness (REFIT) at the European level. When reforming, it was agreed that the group would involve be a Joint Link's group, working with our sister Links across the UK to provide a single united voice on the REFIT process. The Joint Links REFIT Task and Finish Group was particularly active in the second half of 2014 and into 2015 as the REFIT process unfolded.

The REFIT initiative focuses on reducing 'regulatory burden', so as to meet EU policy and regulatory goals at least cost. The inclusion of the Birds and Habitats Directives within this process was considered by Link members to represent a significant threat to the Directives. The group's main priority in 2014 was therefore to bring together Link members, and our Joint Link partners, in defending the Directives through: facilitating meetings and information sharing; supporting and advising on development and advocacy of a shared position; and engaging with key decision-makers and other stakeholders. The majority of the group's work will take place during 2015, during which time the European Commission will launch its consultation, seeking the views of both NGOs and the public. The group will respond to the consultation and carry out advocacy work to support the Joint Links' members in communicating our shared position.

The **Water Working Group** continued to operate successfully as the Blueprint for Water coalition, along with partners the Angling Trust and Waterwise. In 2014 the main areas of activity were the development and launch of the new website, development and launch of the 'Save Our Waters' campaign, development of narrative and policy asks for the Blueprint 2015, as well as works relating to catchment management, abstraction reform, the Water Framework Directive, flooding and dredging (including publishing two reports), Price Review (PR14) (including hosting a conference), water pricing and sustainable urban drainage (SUDs). A number of external meetings were held with Defra, the Environment Agency (EA), water companies, Water UK, Ofwat, the No.10 Policy Unit, and several meetings with the minister, including a site visit.

The group's main achievements this year have been the proactive work we have embarked on with the launch of a new website and the 'Save our Waters' campaign. The campaign was launched concurrently with the release of the River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) in order to provide a mechanism for these wider audiences to feed into the EA's plans on how to manage our waters more sustainably. The campaign has yielded more than 430 public responses to date. As part of the campaign and website Blueprint has also, this year, developed an info-graphic, e-news template and system and Blueprint blog.

The Group also launched an environmental assessment of water company plans, using a scorecard system which analysed companies' customer facing plans. This followed significant engagement with water companies. In May, the Blueprint also hosted a conference on how to work with water companies in restoring our rivers and wetlands.

In February, the Blueprint coalition worked with the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM) on a report 'Floods and dredging – a reality check' and, ahead of the Autumn Statement, launched the report 'Dredging up Trouble', which identifies 10 priority areas that would inevitably lose out if new funding is ring-fenced for dredging alone.

Link's **Land Use Planning Working Group** continued to work to improve the planning system in England, so that it delivers better protection and enhancement of the natural environment as a key component of sustainable development. In 2014, the main areas of activity related to: the implementation of the government's National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance; biodiversity offsetting; and the re-development of brownfield land.

The group responded to a number of government consultations, presented evidence to the Communities and Local Governments (CLG) Select Committee, held bilateral meetings with government departments (CLG and Defra) and compiled best practice advice on the re-development of brownfield land.

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Impacts of the group for 2014 include developing a shared position on the highly contentious issue of fracking; and submitting a consultation response on the similarly complicated and controversial issue of biodiversity offsetting, with this response influencing the Government's decision not to pursue a voluntary offsetting system. The recommendations made by the CLG Select Committee from the consultation on the operation of the National Planning Policy Framework mirrored the requests presented by Link members, particularly with regard to sustainable development and the protection on ancient woodland. This can be seen as a resounding success for the group's work. The group also secured a number of very important changes to the government's National Planning Policy Guidance, particularly on brownfield sites, housing numbers and the status of planted ancient woodland.

Link established the **Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) Task and Finish Group** in 2012, in response to interest from a number of Link members.

One of the group's main achievements in 2014 was successfully influencing Defra to implement a review of Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This followed a successful Link meeting with Defra Minister, Lord de Mauley, and Defra's Trevor Salmon, where the group proposed that a review of Schedule 9 was necessary. Defra subsequently announced, at a joint meeting with the group, that there will be a JNCC-led review of Schedule 9 and Link secured three representative places on the Schedule 9 review working group. Draft species lists for inclusion on Schedule 9, a Ban on Sale and a Member States list for the EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation were developed by the group, and were sent to Defra to influence the process.

Also in 2014, the group gave oral evidence to the Environmental Audit Committee on invasive species and submitted further written evidence – which was mentioned in the official report. Through the group's recommendations throughout the GB Strategy review, it is almost certain the England Working Group will be reinstated as part of the new strategy. The group also produced a paper outlining the true economic cost management and eradication of INNS to Link member organisations.

Work across a number of working groups included the submission, in July, of written evidence to the Environment Audit Committee inquiry on an Environmental Scorecard. Link also liaised with the Committee to put forward Link members to give oral evidence to one of the evidence sessions. The response highlighted the key findings, conclusions and recommendations made in Link's Nature Check 2013 report, which assessed the Government's progress on its commitments to the natural environment.

2. Help protect and connect marine species and habitats through the promotion of an ecosystem based approach to marine conservation

In 2014, the **Marine Working Group** continued to proactively influence the designation and management of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) in English seas as well as working in partnership with the Joint Links to campaign for a UK Ecologically Coherent Network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

The group's main achievement this year was its Marine Charter campaign, calling for the swift designation of an ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in UK seas. More than 170 MPs and Peers signed Link's Marine Charter and it was supported by twenty organisations, including 18 Link members and the three sister Links in the devolved countries. Link hosted a Marine Charter reception at the House of Commons in November, to showcase the cross-party support for Link's Marine Charter campaign ahead of the General Election. The reception also included speeches, endorsing the Charter, from the Fisheries Minister George Eustice MP, Shadow Defra Minister Angela Smith MP and Lib Dem Defra spokesperson Roger Williams.

Also this year, the group arranged a Marine Conservation Zone site visit for the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for farming, food and marine environment, George Eustice MP, to the Isles of Scilly. As part of the visit, Link hosted a tour for the Minister and his officials on a glass-bottomed boat, which provided an opportunity for him to view marine wildlife both above and below the water. During the visit, Link also briefed the Minister and Defra officials on a range of marine conservation issues.

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Link met with Natural England, JNCC and Defra marine officials during the year to discuss progress on MCZ designations, protection for mobile species, ecological coherence and marine spatial planning. Link also met with the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) implementation team at Defra to discuss MSFD Programmes of Measures. In August, the group met with Tara Singh, special advisor to the Prime Minister, to discuss the marine environment. Link briefed Tara on Marine Conservation Zones, sites for mobile species, ecological coherence and Link's Marine Charter campaign. The group also submitted written and verbal evidence to two inquiries in 2014, the Environmental Audit Committee Inquiry into MPAs and The House of Lords EU Sub-Committee inquiry into EU regional marine co-operation.

Throughout 2014 Link continued to effectively coordinate Joint Links marine work. In March, Link coordinated a Joint Links response to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive consultation and arranged a Joint Links marine meeting in London in November to discuss priority MSFD work for the next two years. Link also coordinated a Joint Links steering group which commissioned an assessment of the ecological coherence of the UK Marine Protected Area network. The final report was published in June and the key findings were presented at a Joint Links workshop at the Marine and Coastal Policy Forum at Plymouth University.

One of the key objectives of Link's **Whales Working Group** is to ensure the UK Government maintains a strong anti-whaling and pro-conservation strategy for the International Whaling Commission (IWC). The group also addresses other issues relating to cetacean conservation and welfare, such as ocean noise and marine debris.

During 2014 the group met with George Eustice MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for farming, food and marine environment, to discuss priorities for the International Whaling Commission (IWC) meeting. The group also met with the UK Commissioner to the IWC Nigel Gooding on numerous occasions throughout the year to advocate and advise on a range of issues. Members of the Group also worked closely with the IWC Defra team on a successful strategy to enhance the work carried out by the IWC to address cetacean welfare issues including the welfare implications of environmental threats on cetaceans. Two Link representatives, Mark Simmonds (HSI) and Claire Bass (WAP) were included on the UK delegation to the IWC meeting in Slovenia in September. The Defra Minister George Eustice wrote to Link following the IWC meeting to express his thanks. He said: "I would ask you to pass on my thanks to all Link members for working closely with the UK Government on all of these issues; I and the Defra officials very much value the expertise you bring to discussions and the support provided to the Defra team".

In June Link organised an evening drinks reception for IWC commissioners and officials from the anti-whaling like-minded countries. The following day, Link's Whales group met with Defra and the like-minded countries for a more formal meeting to discuss a range of issues related to the governance of the International Whaling Commission and Iceland, Japan and Greenland's whaling programmes.

3. Raise the political profile of the ethical and economic value of biodiversity and the socio-economic and ecological impacts of its loss

Link's **Biodiversity Group** continued to engage with the Government over its biodiversity strategy, *Biodiversity 2020*.

The group held a number of external meetings including a meeting with the then Defra Policy Director Robin Mortimer, to discuss funding and communications of the Government's Biodiversity Strategy. The group also met with Defra's Better Regulation Team, to discuss the review of wildlife guidance, and met with the Defra team working on biodiversity indicators. Link was also represented at a number of external meetings including the Monitoring and Surveillance Strategy for Terrestrial Biodiversity in England Workshop and workshops focused on Local Nature Partnerships and Natura 2000.

Link continues to be represented on the Terrestrial Biodiversity Group and the UK Biodiversity Indicators Steering Group. Link's Director holds quarterly meetings with Shirley Trundle, Defra Director for Sustainable Land Management, at which biodiversity is discussed, and sits on the TBG's Communications Task and Finish

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Group, led by Natural England and aimed at developing a shared communications strategy for Biodiversity 2020.

Link established its **Natural Values Task and Finish Group** in April 2013 to enable Link members to discuss issues on natural values and capital and to manage Link's work on biodiversity offsetting, as well as facilitating engagement with the reports and recommendations of the Natural Capital Committee and the Ecosystem Markets Task Force.

In 2014, the group's activity involved facilitating contact between members and key policy makers and keeping members briefed on the development of natural capital policy. It also facilitated opportunities for Link members to engage with relevant policy makers, e.g. with Natural England on biodiversity offsetting and the Natural Capital Committee Secretariat on its 25-year plan.

4. Promote the delivery of access to nature that is compatible with conservation of wildlife, re-connects society with the environment and enhances human health and welfare

In the response to the Environmental Audit Committee's inquiry on an environmental scorecard we reiterated the recommendations made by the Independent Panel on Forestry regarding access. The current approach to open access should be reviewed in order to provide more and better access to some of the UK's most beautiful areas. Landowners and farmers who provide permanent public access should be supported through Agri-Environment scheme funding. We also reinforced the recommendation to reintroduce the right of coastal access under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

Link has also addressed access to nature through its work on biodiversity offsetting. The Government's current proposals for biodiversity offsetting take no account of the social value of green space. Link met with Natural England in February to discuss the proposed system of biodiversity offsetting and how it could better deliver for biodiversity.

5. Raise the UK's commitment to wildlife protection, animal welfare and respect for animals

During 2014, the **Wildlife Trade Working Group's** main impact was the securing of medium-term funding for the National Wildlife Crime Unit. The group also played a valuable role in sharing intelligence amongst Link members and in keeping wildlife crime on the agenda of the relevant agencies. As a reflection of its coordinating role, Link was invited to sit on the Crown Prosecution Service's Community Involvement Panel and will also be holding quarterly meetings with the new Head of the National Wildlife Crime Unit.

Link members also engaged with the Government in advance of the London Summit on Illegal Wildlife Trade, an international conference involving 50 nations. Link took part in the NGO stakeholder meetings and wrote to the Government to advocate measures which Link would like to see included in the London Declaration. The majority of these were subsequently adopted.

The group asked for cybercrime to be included in the pending Convention on the Trade in Endangered Species (COTES) review by writing to the Minister (it was previously not part of the review). The Minister subsequently confirmed that the consultation will provide Link members with the opportunity to present evidence of wildlife cybercrime.

One of Link's key areas of work is to address animal welfare and protection. Link has therefore worked with a number of member organisations to explore the opportunities for Link adding value to their work. The first meeting of the new **Animal Welfare Strategy Group** will take place in January 2015, where members will agree the Group's terms of reference and key activities for the year.

The Group's primary aim is to raise the UK Government's commitment to animal welfare and protection. It will do this by identifying opportunities to provide support and evidence-based, pragmatic animal welfare advice to Link's current groups. In doing so, the Group's work will improve collaboration and understanding between

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conservation and animal welfare focused organisations and will support Link's other working groups in addressing animal welfare issues, as appropriate. The Group will also develop connections with others working in the field of animal protection, including other NGOs and academics.

The **Legal Strategy Group** continues to bring together legal experts from across the sector to identify and take opportunities to provide support to members and working groups in the implementation, defence and development of environmental law. The group also addresses legal issues in its own right, including the reform of wildlife legislation and access to environmental justice.

Throughout 2014 the group coordinated opposition to Part 4 of the Criminal Justice and Courts Bill, which will make it more difficult and more expensive for civil society to progress a review of the decisions of public bodies by the process of Judicial Review. Activities included producing two briefings for peers and the Shadow Justice Team, in advance of readings in the House of Lords. The group also liaised with MPs and peers over suggested amendments to the Bill, which were specifically referred to during the debate in the House of Lords at Report stage. We were successful in defeating three clauses through peers' amendments but, unfortunately, the House of Commons subsequently voted to largely reverse these defeats and in January 2015, the Lords conceded to the latest government amendments. Despite this result, Link's concerns were recognised in the debates and it is possible we helped the Lords to get some moderating amendments from the Government.

In June 2014 The Legal Strategy Group responded to Law Commission consultation on Conservation Covenants. The Commission described Link's role as 'exceptionally useful' in undertaking a pre-consultation survey on Conservation Covenants. Link has also engaged with the Law Commission with regards to its review on Wildlife Law, since its launch in 2012 and in April 2014 continued to facilitate dialogue between the Commission and Link members by hosting a meeting to discuss specific elements of the review, including the incorporation of a purpose and link to the CBD in the Bill, the incorporation of various elements of existing legislation such as the NERC Act Biodiversity Duty and Weeds Act, the definition of various terms, and the development of vicarious liability or similar measures to confer responsibility for the actions of wildlife criminals on their masters.

Law Commission lawyers overseeing the review have reported that Link's role in supporting their engagement with members has been very useful and that Link's written submissions have been 'invaluable' in formulating policy for any future Wildlife Bill. The draft Wildlife Law Reform Bill is due to be published in May 2015 and the Group will continue to engage with the Law Commission on this issue.

6. Improve the advocacy of agreed collective messages from the environmental voluntary sector to those who can help us bring about the change we desire

Throughout 2014 Link continued to present agreed collective messages to those who have the capacity to bring about change - both in Government, and elsewhere. And Link continued to improve the effectiveness of this advocacy.

As in previous years, the secretariat oversaw the production of a large number of collective statements and reports, including 19 consultation responses, 12 e-bulletins, 10 reports and position statements, 7 parliamentary briefings and 6 press releases. Link also sent 29 letters to Ministers, MPs, civil servants, Commissioners, embassies and Ambassadors, plus 22 letters to water companies. The secretariat organised numerous meetings with Ministers across Defra and other government departments and agencies.

Link's Director also worked to advocate key messages, and raise the profile of Link and its members, by attending external meetings and workshops with Ministers, Government departments and other stakeholders. Engagement with Government and its agencies included: quarterly meetings with both Defra's Director of Communications and Defra's Director of Sustainable Land Management and Farming; meetings with the Chair of the Board at JNCC; Natural England's chief executive, Chair of the Board and Director of Strategy and Innovation; meetings with Defra's Chief Scientific Advisor; and meetings and a workshop convened by Defra's Chief Social researcher. The Director also contributed to the communications sub group of Defra's Terrestrial Biodiversity Group.

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A number of meetings were also held with the Prime Minister's Special Advisor on the natural environment. Link's Director coordinated meeting agendas and liaised with representatives from a number of Link members who also attended the meetings.

Another key element of Link's Director's work was to liaise with chief executives and policy directors of Link member organisations. Numerous such meetings were held throughout the year, providing an opportunity to share information and, in particular for the Director to discuss Link's emerging new strategy. Liaison also included providing support and advice to quarterly meetings of the Nature CEOs group of chief executives, along with convening two Link Policy Directors meetings and two meetings of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Link's working groups.

Link's Director continues to contribute to and benefit from a very productive relationship with the three Directors of our sister Links in the devolved countries. Directors hold quarterly phone meetings, in addition to a more or less weekly exchange of emails. The Directors regularly share both strategic and operational information and, following a very productive meeting at the Joint Links conference in Glasgow, in October 2015, are exploring ways in which the Joint Links can work even more proactively to effect positive change across the UK. Two examples include an enhanced UK-wide approach to marine policy and campaigns, along with the more recent and highly successful Joint Links work on the European Commission's review of the Habitats and Birds Directives, which resulted in evidence being submitted to the Commission supported by 100 NGOs across the UK.

A key element of the Director's work in 2014 was also to develop and maintain productive relationships with current and potential funders. In 2014, Link benefitted from grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the John Ellerman Foundation, and Link members Greenpeace and WWF-UK.

7. Add value to the work of members by facilitating consensus on policies and providing support in the production of joint positions on a wide range of issues

Link continued to work to facilitate consensus amongst members on a huge range of issues within its working groups, as well as developing new areas – such as our Habitats and Birds work – where there is an appetite for joint working amongst members.

Link's Policy Directors group met twice in 2014, as did Link's Chairs and Vice Chairs of working groups. In each case, members used the opportunities to share information, discuss current policy issues, plan future work and explore opportunities for cross-working.

Link responds to consultation where there is clear added value to members and where the work is likely to have a significant impact. Consultation responses are routinely followed up with meetings with the appropriate consulting department or agency and the Link team encourages joint work on UK-level policies of mutual interest between Sister Links' groups in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The four Sister Links share the same mission and aims to great extent, and for this reason we regularly exchange information and views on a range of policy and operational work. The Links secretariats are in regular contact and, in 2014, specific teleconferences were convened on subjects including: the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the European Commission 'REFIT' review of the Habitats and Birds Directives. The Joint Links continued to collaborate on issues where a UK approach is relevant.

In October 2014, the Joint Links held their biennial conference. The two-day event was hosted in Glasgow by Scottish Environment Link and was well attended by the four Links staff and members from across the UK. The event provided a chance for all representatives, of both the Joint Links and their respective member organisations, to discuss ways of working and strategic and policy issues across the UK.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2014

Marine conservation is one area where all four country Links work together. Link's Marine and Policy Campaigns Coordinator coordinated the Joint Links response to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive consultation in April. In addition, the Marine Charter, although a Wildlife and Countryside Link initiative, was also supported by the three Sister Links. The Joint Links also commissioned an assessment of the ecological coherence of the UK's marine protected area network, and facilitated a workshop at the Marine and Coastal Policy Forum, where it presented the findings of the report.

Link's Water working group joined up with Wales Environment Link to respond to the consultation on the proposed application for a temporary derogation to use cypermethrin.

The Links regularly include reports on the sister Links' work in their regular information bulletins to members so that relevant intelligence, including parliamentary information, is shared across the networks. We are grateful to WWF for providing a grant to support Joint Links activities in 2014.

Link also sought collaborative partnerships and new members to help strengthen and broaden consensus among NGOs. In 2014 we maintained collaborative partnerships with the Angling Trust and Waterwise through the Blueprint for Water coalition. In 2014, The John Muir Trust and ORCA joined as Associate Members, the Institute of Fisheries Management joined as Full Members and the Bumblebee Conservation upgraded from Associate to Full members.

8. Provide a safe forum for members to exchange information, and develop and promote action that could effect positive change

Throughout 2014 Link maintained a watching brief on a broad range of issues across the spectrum of nature conservation, access and recreation, and animal welfare. We provided opportunities for members to explore new areas of policy, or areas of policy where consensus has not been forthcoming in the past.

To provide members with appropriate, accurate and timely information, all responses to Link letters were circulated to members within one week of receipt. The Secretariat ensured Link's protocols and procedures were followed, specifically around electronic communications and confidentiality, and we regularly reviewed and updated our mailing lists and databases of all Link contacts. Our monthly e-bulletin continued to be made available to both members and non-member subscribers, as part of our strategy to engage those in the wider sector.

9. Maintain a high standard of service whilst developing the Secretariat's capacity to meet the needs of the membership

The Link Secretariat successfully maintained a high level of service in 2014, despite a number of staffing changes and a reorganisation of the team's work to prioritise on emerging work, such as the Environmental Audit Committee's scorecard inquiry and re-establishing the Habitats and Birds Directives Task and Finish Group to tackle the European Commission's review. Annual staff appraisals and day-to-day feedback from the membership suggests that the secretariat is highly valued and recognised as approachable, effective and highly professional.

We worked with our members and donors to ensure receipt of funds to projected levels and a high priority continued to be given to staff training, including regular sessions with an executive coach for some staff members. The training budget continued to be maintained at previous levels in real terms. A range of courses were attended throughout the year on subjects including: social media, accounting, employment law, marine policy and parliamentary engagement.

Link continues to offer volunteering opportunities to people with a keen interest in Link issues. In 2014, we benefitted from the help of Maria Crastus, Adam Raban, and Lorena Villa. Rose Wakeham also provided secretariat support to the Invasive Non-Native Species Group until April 2014.

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This year our volunteers worked on areas including social media, impact reporting and member surveys. Volunteers were given the chance to contribute to Link's monthly e-bulletins and to help with various Link meetings including the AGM and the parliamentary launch of the Marine Charter. In addition, volunteers were provided the opportunity to become involved in the activities of Link's working groups by supporting meetings, gathering information and undertaking specific research projects.

Link's Board of Trustees, and its Finance and Resources Sub Committee, each held four meetings during 2014, including its annual away day meeting in July. Three additional trustees meetings were held to specifically develop Link's emerging new strategy.

Link thanks the following for their financial support in 2014: Natural England; the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation; the John Ellerman Foundation; Heritage Lottery Fund; Greenpeace; and WWF, along with all our members and partner organisations.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2014

Link Personnel

For much of 2014, Link employed four full time staff and one part time staff. The team comprised: Elaine King (Director); Raul Matamoros, Kate Hand and Kirsten Loveday (Policy and Campaigns Coordinators); John Sadler (Marine Policy and Campaigns Coordinator); and Morwenna McKenzie (Information and Office Coordinator).

In May Kate Hand left Link and Raul Matamoros took over the role of Policy and Campaigns Coordinator. In October, Kirsten Loveday began her maternity leave. Morwenna McKenzie is covering the role of Policy and Campaigns coordinator in a full time capacity whilst a new member of the Link team, Maria Ellis, was employed part time to provide cover for the Information and Office Coordinator position.

Financial Review

The 2014 accounts show net incoming resources of £19,253 for the year compared to £26,230 in 2013. The unrestricted reserves at 31 December 2014 amount to £115,200 and are equivalent to approximately 8 months' total unrestricted expenditure.

Reserves Policy

Wildlife and Countryside Link maintains reserves equivalent to six months' operating costs. These funds are unrestricted and therefore available to fund all aspects of Link's operations in the event that they should be required. These reserves shall allow Link to plan against future uncertainties.

The target level for reserves shall be set at that required for six months operation of the organisation so that, should Link encounter financial difficulty, it may continue to provide its members with services at the same level for six months, thus giving members ample warning should the financial situation deteriorate further. It is felt that this is an appropriate amount of time for a small organisation such as Link, as it is likely that any additional or emergency funding would take some months to secure.

The reserve funds shall help to meet working capital requirements to cover Link's normal cash-flow operations throughout the year, and is reviewed on a regular basis. For the majority of 2014, Link's reserves were held across The Co-operative Bank and a Nationwide account, to ensure that total assets held in one bank did not exceed £80,000.

Risk review

The major risks to which the charity is exposed, as identified by the Trustees, have been reviewed and systems established to mitigate those risks. In November 2014 the Management Committee updated the approved register of risks which will be reviewed regularly as part of the charity's risk management strategy.

Members of the Management Committee

Members of the Management Committee, who are Directors for the purpose of Company Law and Trustees for the purpose of Charity Law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report, are set out on Page 2.

**WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE LINK
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**TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2014**

Preparation of the report

This report has been prepared taking advantage of the small companies exemption of section 415A of the Companies Act 2006.

Independent Examiner

A resolution to confirm the appointment of Simon Erskine from MHA Macintyre Hudson as independent examiner to the organisation was passed at the Annual General Meeting in December 2014 and will again be proposed at the next Annual General Meeting.

By order of the Management Committee.

Hazel Norman, Chair

17 June 2015

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INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of Wildlife and Countryside Link

I report on the financial statements of the Charity for the year ended 31 December 2014 which are set out on pages 19 to 29.

This report is made solely to the Charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 and regulations made under section 154 of that Act. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the Charity's Trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an Independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Charity and the Charity's Trustees as a body, for my work or for this report.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and examiner

The Trustees, who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law, are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. The Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act) and that an independent examination is needed. The Charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales..

Having satisfied myself that the Charity is not subject to audit under charity or company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

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

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 financial statements presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements, 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 financial statements present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

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:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and
 - to prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charitieshave not been met; or

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INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT (continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014

- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Signed:

Dated:

Simon Erskine FCA FCIE DChA

MHA MacIntyre Hudson
Chartered Accountants
New Bridge Street House
30-34 New Bridge Street
London EC4V 6BJ

WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE LINK
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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(incorporating income and expenditure account)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014

| | Note | Unrestricted funds 2014 £ | Restricted funds 2014 £ | Total funds 2014 £ | <i>Total funds 2013 £</i> |
|---|------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Incoming resources | | | | | |
| Incoming resources from generated funds: | | | | | |
| Voluntary income | 2 | 62,814 | - | 62,814 | 32,500 |
| Investment income- bank interest | | - | - | - | 336 |
| Incoming resources from charitable activities | 3 | 125,649 | 110,454 | 236,103 | 220,451 |
| Total incoming resources | | 188,463 | 110,454 | 298,917 | 253,287 |
| Resources expended | | | | | |
| Charitable activities | 5 | 162,124 | 114,000 | 276,124 | 224,385 |
| Governance costs | 6 | 3,540 | - | 3,540 | 2,673 |
| Total resources expended | | 165,664 | 114,000 | 279,664 | 227,057 |
| Net incoming / (outgoing) resources before transfers | | 22,799 | (3,546) | 19,253 | 26,230 |
| Transfers between Funds | 12 | 1,576 | (1,576) | - | - |
| Net movement in funds for the year | | 24,375 | (5,122) | 19,253 | 26,230 |
| <i>Total funds brought forward</i> | | 90,825 | 54,274 | 145,099 | 118,869 |
| Total funds carried forward | | 115,200 | 49,152 | 164,352 | 145,099 |

The notes on pages 21 to 29 form part of these financial statements.

WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE LINK
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REGISTERED NUMBER: 03889519

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2014

| | Note | £ | 2014 £ | £ | 2013 £ |
|---|------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Fixed assets | | | | | |
| Tangible assets | 9 | | 2,287 | | 4,307 |
| Current assets | | | | | |
| Debtors | 10 | 7,501 | | 12,808 | |
| Cash at bank and in hand | | 161,933 | | 135,221 | |
| | | | 169,434 | | 148,029 |
| Creditors: amounts falling due within one year | 11 | (7,369) | | (7,237) | |
| Net current assets | | | 162,065 | | 140,792 |
| Net assets | | | 164,352 | | 145,099 |
| Charity funds | | | | | |
| Restricted funds | 12 | | 49,152 | | 54,274 |
| Unrestricted funds | 12 | | 115,200 | | 90,825 |
| Total funds | | | 164,352 | | 145,099 |

The Trustees consider that the Charity is entitled to exemption from the requirement to have an audit under the provisions of section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 ("the Act") and members have not required the Charity to obtain an audit for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Act.

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and for preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity as at 31 December 2014 and of its net incoming resources for the year in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395 of the Act and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the Charity.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to small companies within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008).

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 17 June 2015 and signed on their behalf, by:

.....
Hazel Norman, Acting Chair

.....
David Lind, Treasurer

The notes on pages 21 to 29 form part of these financial statements.

WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE LINK
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1 BASIS OF PREPARATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, with the exception of investments which are included at market value and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008). The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' published in March 2005, applicable accounting standards and the Companies Act 2006.

1.2 COMPANY STATUS

The Charity is a company limited by guarantee. In the event of the Charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the Charity.

1.3 FUND ACCOUNTING

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes. The costs of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

1.4 INCOMING RESOURCES

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of financial activities when the Charity has entitlement to the funds, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Subscription income from full and associate member organisations is invoiced on a calendar year basis and is recognised accordingly.

Grants are recognised as income in the Statement of financial activities in accordance with the terms attached by the grantor.

Income from recharged costs is accrued when the associated costs are incurred. Other donations and sundry income are recognised in the Statement of financial activities when received.

1.5 RESOURCES EXPENDED

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been included under expense categories that aggregate all costs for allocation to activities. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular activities they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of the resources.

Governance costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the Charity and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

1.6 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS AND DEPRECIATION

All assets costing more than £1,000 are capitalised.

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014**

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following bases:

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|---------|
| Fixtures and fittings | - | 4 years |
| Office equipment | - | 4 years |

1.7 OPERATING LEASES

Rentals under operating leases are charged to the Statement of financial activities on a straight line basis over the lease term.

2. VOLUNTARY INCOME

| | Unrestricted funds 2014 £ | Total funds 2014 £ | <i>Total funds 2013 £</i> |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Donations | 5,314 | 5,314 | 7,500 |
| Grants for core funding | 57,500 | 57,500 | 25,000 |
| | <u>62,814</u> | <u>62,814</u> | <u>32,500</u> |
| Voluntary income | <u><u>62,814</u></u> | <u><u>62,814</u></u> | <u><u>32,500</u></u> |

3. INCOMING RESOURCES FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES - ANALYSIS BY ACTIVITY

| | Unrestricted funds 2014 £ | Restricted funds 2014 £ | Total funds 2014 £ | <i>Total funds 2013 £</i> |
|---|--|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Facilitation, co-ordination and information provision | 125,649 | 110,454 | 236,103 | 220,451 |
| | <u>125,649</u> | <u>110,454</u> | <u>236,103</u> | <u>220,451</u> |

4. INCOMING RESOURCES FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES - ANALYSIS BY TYPE OF INCOME

| | Unrestricted funds £ | Restricted funds £ | 2014 £ | <i>2013 £</i> |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Subscriptions | 126,314 | - | 126,314 | 120,719 |
| Grants for project work | - | 109,789 | 109,789 | 95,562 |
| Rent and service charges receivable | - | - | - | 3,970 |
| Other income | - | - | - | 200 |
| | <u>126,314</u> | <u>109,789</u> | <u>236,103</u> | <u>220,451</u> |
| Total | <u><u>126,314</u></u> | <u><u>109,789</u></u> | <u><u>236,103</u></u> | <u><u>220,451</u></u> |

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014

5. EXPENDITURE BY CHARITABLE ACTIVITY - SUMMARY BY EXPENDITURE TYPE

| | Staff costs £ | Other costs £ | 2014 £ | 2013 £ |
|---|------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Charitable activities | | | | |
| Facilitation, co-ordination and information provision | 155,553 | 120,571 | 276,124 | 224,385 |
| | <u>155,553</u> | <u>120,571</u> | <u>276,124</u> | <u>224,385</u> |
| Governance costs | - | 3,540 | 3,540 | 2,673 |
| Total | <u>155,553</u> | <u>124,111</u> | <u>279,664</u> | <u>227,058</u> |

6. GOVERNANCE COSTS

| | Unrestricted funds 2014 £ | Total funds 2014 £ | Total funds 2013 £ |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Independent examination fees | 3,300 | 3,300 | 2,640 |
| Legal and professional fees | - | - | 13 |
| Other expenses | 240 | 240 | 20 |
| | <u>3,540</u> | <u>3,540</u> | <u>2,673</u> |

7. NET INCOMING / (OUTGOING) RESOURCES

This is stated after charging:

| | 2014 £ | 2013 £ |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| Depreciation of tangible fixed assets: | | |
| - owned by the charity | 2,020 | 2,020 |
| Independent examination fees (including VAT) | 3,300 | 2,640 |
| Pension costs | 6,821 | 7,859 |
| | <u>6,821</u> | <u>7,859</u> |

During the year, no Trustees received any remuneration (2013 - £NIL).

During the year, no Trustees received any benefits in kind (2013 - £NIL).

During the year, no Trustees received any reimbursement of expenses (2012 - £50 to 2 Trustees).

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014

8. STAFF COSTS

Staff costs were as follows:

| | 2014 | <i>2013</i> |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Wages and salaries | 137,958 | <i>139,025</i> |
| Social security costs | 10,774 | <i>12,580</i> |
| Pension costs | 6,821 | <i>7,859</i> |
| | 155,553 | <i>159,464</i> |

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

| | 2014 | <i>2013</i> |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| | No. | No. |
| | 5 | <i>5</i> |

No employee received remuneration amounting to more than £60,000 in either year.

9. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

| | Fixtures and fittings | Office equipment | Total |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| COST | | | |
| At 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2014 | 3,017 | 19,398 | 22,415 |
| DEPRECIATION | | | |
| At 1 January 2014 | 2,589 | 15,519 | 18,108 |
| Charge for the year | 427 | 1,593 | 2,020 |
| At 31 December 2014 | 3,016 | 17,112 | 20,128 |
| NET BOOK VALUE | | | |
| At 31 December 2014 | 1 | 2,286 | 2,287 |
| <i>At 31 December 2013</i> | <i>428</i> | <i>3,879</i> | <i>4,307</i> |

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014

10. DEBTORS

| | 2014 | 2013 |
|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Prepayments | 7,310 | 7,528 |
| Accrued income | 191 | 5,280 |
| | <hr/> 7,501 <hr/> | <hr/> 12,808 <hr/> |

11. CREDITORS:
AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

| | 2014 | 2013 |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Other creditors | 269 | - |
| Accruals | 7,100 | 7,237 |
| | <hr/> 7,369 <hr/> | <hr/> 7,237 <hr/> |

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014

12. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

| | Brought Forward £ | Incoming resources £ | Resources Expended £ | Transfers in/out £ | Carried Forward £ |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| UNRESTRICTED FUNDS | | | | | |
| General Fund | 90,825 | 188,463 | (165,664) | 1,576 | 115,200 |
| RESTRICTED FUNDS | | | | | |
| 1) Joint Links | 2,000 | 5,422 | (6,092) | (665) | 665 |
| 2) Beyond the Pillars/ Crunch time for CAP | 1,293 | - | - | - | 1,293 |
| 3) Marine Bill Campaign: | | | | | |
| i. MPCC project Phase II | 8,526 | - | (6,020) | - | 2,506 |
| ii. MPCC Phase III | 40,000 | 40,000 | (37,120) | - | 42,880 |
| iii. Marine general | - | 392 | (392) | - | - |
| iv. Marine Charter | - | 9,811 | (10,377) | - | (566) |
| 4) Blueprint for Water | 404 | 19,600 | (19,266) | - | 738 |
| 5) Planning Coalition | 289 | - | - | - | 289 |
| 6) Nature Check / Greenest Government Ever | 759 | - | (9) | - | 750 |
| 7) Invasive Non-Native Species | 1,003 | - | (442) | (561) | - |
| 8) ECN | - | 20,629 | (20,629) | - | - |
| 9) Strategic review | - | 14,600 | (13,653) | (350) | 597 |
| | <u>54,274</u> | <u>110,454</u> | <u>(114,000)</u> | <u>(1,576)</u> | <u>49,152</u> |
| Total of funds | <u><u>145,099</u></u> | <u><u>298,917</u></u> | <u><u>(279,664)</u></u> | <u><u>-</u></u> | <u><u>164,352</u></u> |

Purposes of Restricted Funds:

1. Joint Links

The WWF Joint Links project grant supports the four Link organisations in the UK (Wildlife and Countryside Link, Wales Environment Link, Scottish Environment LINK and Northern Ireland Environment Link) in updating each other, and collaborating on, work programmes, key priorities, and operational matters, through meetings and conference calls. In 2014, £2000 was carried over from 2013. £2659 was distributed equally amongst the Joint Links for use in individual Joint Link's core work. The remaining funds were spent on travel and subsistence and meeting room hire for the 2014 Joint Link's conference in Glasgow. A surplus of £665 is carried over into 2015.

2. Common Agricultural Policy

This project was set up in 2008 to fund the publication and launch of the Agriculture Working Group's policy perspective on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy. No activity took place in 2014 and £1293 is carried over into 2015.

3. Marine Bill Campaign

This relates to funding from the Tubney Charitable Trust, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the John Ellerman Foundation towards the costs of a full time Marine Policy and Campaigns Coordinator at Wildlife and Countryside Link. This project fund provides for the salary and all associated expenses of the MPCC post. The full cost recovery principle has been applied to this project and transfers from this fund are

WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE LINK
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014

12. STATEMENT OF FUNDS (continued)

made to Link's core fund to cover all associated support costs.

i) MPCC Phase II

This relates to funding provided by the Tubney Charitable Trust and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation towards the costs of a full time Marine and Policy Campaigns Co-ordinator. The project ended on January 31 2014 and was immediately succeeded by the MPCC Phase III. There is £2,506 left in this fund and we are in discussion with the Foundation regarding the underspend.

ii) MPCC Phase III

This relates to funding from the John Ellerman Foundation towards the costs of a full time Marine Policy and Campaigns Coordinator at Wildlife and Countryside Link. The project will run for three years from January 2014 – January 2017. This project fund provides for the salary and all associated expenses of the MPCC post. The full cost recovery principle has been applied to this project and transfers from this fund are made to Link's core fund to cover all associated support costs.

iii) Marine Charter

This relates to funding from The Wildlife Trusts, on behalf of the MPA Fighting Fund, towards the cost of the Marine Charter campaign which was active from February 2014. During 2014 funds were spent on all expenses related to the set up and running of the campaign including web pages and media graphic costs, mail outs, a parliamentary event and conference call expenditure. A deficit of £566 was carried over into 2015. This deficit will be recovered during 2015 from the Wildlife Trusts.

iv) Marine General

This fund is used as a holding account for Marine Working Group project activities that Link has paid for on behalf of its members. The costs have then been recovered from the members. The fund broke even at the end of 2014.

4. Blueprint for Water

The Blueprint for Water project was set up in 2009 to fund the publication and distribution of the Blueprint coalition's third report. £404 was carried forward into 2014 from 2013. Link member charities contributed £19,600 to the Blueprint project over the course of 2014. £19,266 of the fund was spent on developing a Blueprint website and campaigning material, as well as travel and subsistence. £738 will be carried forward into 2015.

5. Planning Coalition

The Planning Coalition fund was set up in 2010 to cover costs associated with the publication and distribution of the new Greenest Planning Ever Coalition's 'Vision for the Future of Planning' report. £288 was carried over into 2014. No funds were spent during 2014 and £288 has been brought forward into 2015.

6. Nature Check / Greenest Government Ever

The Nature Check fund was set up in 2011 to cover the costs associated with assessment, reporting and launch of project findings on the Coalition Government's performance on the natural environment, as part of its commitment to be the "greenest Government ever". £759 was carried over from 2013 into 2014. £9 was spent in 2014 on renewing the Nature Check website address and so £750 has been carried over to 2015.

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12. STATEMENT OF FUNDS (continued)

7. Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

The INNS project was set up in 2012 to fund a volunteer to lead on Link's Invasive Non-Native Species Task and Finish Group. £1003 was carried over into 2014. £442 was spent on funding a volunteer to lead the project as well as travel and subsistence. The project ended in June 2014 and the remaining funds of £561 were subsequently transferred to core.

8. ECN

This fund relates to funding from the WWF for Link's Ecologically Coherent Network (MPA Fighting Fund) project. The project was set up in March 2014 and covers conference calls and consultancy work relating to the project.

9. Strategic Review

The Strategic Review fund was set up in 2014 to fund the development of a new five year strategy for Wildlife and Countryside Link. Link received grants from Heritage Lottery Fund and Esmée Fairbairn totalling £14,600 to fund the project. At the start of the year, Link recovered £350 back to core funds for staff costs. £13,653 was spent during 2014 on subsistence and employing a consultant to help create and develop the strategy. £597 has been carried over to 2015.

SUMMARY OF FUNDS

| | Brought Forward £ | Incoming resources £ | Resources Expended £ | Transfers in/out £ | Carried Forward £ |
|------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| General funds | 90,825 | 188,463 | (165,664) | 1,576 | 115,200 |
| Restricted funds | 54,274 | 110,454 | (114,000) | (1,576) | 49,152 |
| | <u>145,099</u> | <u>298,917</u> | <u>(279,664)</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>164,352</u> |

13. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

| | Unrestricted funds £ | Restricted funds £ | 2014 £ | 2013 £ |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Tangible fixed assets | 2,287 | - | 2,287 | 4,307 |
| Net current assets | - | 162,065 | 162,065 | 140,792 |
| | <u>2,287</u> | <u>162,065</u> | <u>164,352</u> | <u>145,099</u> |

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14. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

At 31 December 2014 the Charity had annual commitments under the non-cancellable operating lease on its premises as follows:

| | 2014 £ | 2013 £ |
|-----------------------|--------------|---------------|
| EXPIRY DATE: | | |
| Within 1 year | 5,371 | - |
| Between 2 and 5 years | - | 21,483 |
| | <u>5,371</u> | <u>21,483</u> |