

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT
01 APRIL 2023 TO 31 MARCH 2024**

Established in 1956 as a Charity, Registration Number 1078434

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CHARITY INFORMATION

Governing Document:	Constitution dated 30.10.99 amended 23.11.02; 18.11.06 & 14.11.09
Charity Number:	1078434
HMRC Charities Reference:	XR37510
Registered Address:	3 Rosebery Road, Great Plumstead, Norwich, NR13 5EA
Administrator	Sarah Vergette
Independent Examiner	Debit & Credit Accountancy Services Limited
Accountants & Solicitors:	None
Bankers:	Barclays Bank
Website:	www.broads-society.org
Email:	admin@broads-society.org
Telephone:	01603 714172
Facebook & Instagram:	broadssociety

OBJECTIVES

- To stimulate public appreciation and knowledge of the Broads by promoting educated and informed discussion about all matters related to the Broads, thus encouraging maximum enjoyment of its special features.
- To maintain, restore, conserve, improve and develop objectives, features, buildings and sites of historical, social, artistic, ecological and scientific interest relating to the Norfolk & Suffolk Broads for the public benefit.
- To take all available steps to safeguard the Region's environment, including its landscape and ecology, and to support, as and when appropriate, the measures being taken by the Broads Authority, Environment Agency and other bodies to achieve this objective.
- To consider and take such steps as are appropriate to comment upon and make representations (incl. appearing at public enquiries) concerning planning, management and operational proposals likely to affect the region.
- To preserve and, where appropriate, improve facilities for navigation.
- To encourage activities beneficial to the Broads and in particular to enable young people to appreciate the regional opportunities.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

Introduction

The Broads Society is a non-governmental, voluntary, membership organisation offering a voice for all who love the Broads. Our members share a common purpose to help secure a sustainable future for the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads as a unique and protected landscape in which leisure, tourism and the local economy can thrive in harmony with the natural environment.

The Broads face many challenges, and the need for strong and united civil society engagement has never been greater. As the Broads Society approaches its 70th anniversary, we will help preserve and enhance the Broads through a strategy that improves governance, builds membership support, implements beneficial programmes in recreation, environment and heritage, encourages volunteering and scrutinises planning applications.

Origins

The Broads Society came into being in 1956 when a group of local businessmen, naturalists and sailors wanted to bring together all the disparate groups that enjoyed the Broads, and to speak as one voice. The inaugural meeting was called on 4 June of that year by Len Ramuz, a keen sailor, entrepreneur and inventor. He wanted this new society to be open to all, no matter their interest in the Broads.

The Society soon became a greatly respected campaigning body, but it was more than that. Social gatherings for members were seen as equally important and many events were held. At this time in Broads history, there was no Broads Authority, no statutory body to 'manage' the Broads. Instead, each local authority oversaw their part of the Broads – a very disjointed way to manage such an important wetland.

Through the years, the Society has campaigned on many important issues including flood protection, inappropriate planning applications and of course monitoring and commenting on the 'Broads Bill' as it made its tortuous way to the statute book, resulting in the eventual formation of the Broads Authority.

Today, the Broads Society continues its important role in Broadland life, still campaigning and, with the challenges that biodiversity loss and climate change pose, working hard for a sustainable future for all.

Organisation

The Trustees during the reporting period were:

Dr Mark Collins (Chair from November 2023)
Mr Paul Rice (Chair to November 2023, Past Chair to 14 September 2024)
Mr Paul Savage (Vice-Chair, to November 2023)
Mrs Diana Cornell (Treasurer)
Mr Colin Dye
Mr George Elliott (to November 2023)
Mr Duncan Holmes
Prof Peter Mason
Mr Anthony Lumbard

The Society's President was: Dr Keith Bacon

The Society's Patron was: Mr Henry Cator OBE

Key volunteers included: Messrs Marc Chattle, David Edleston, Peter Smith and Martin Thirkettle.

Strategy and Management

During FY 2023/24 the Society prepared itself for a change in direction. A new Chair was elected at the AGM in November 2023 and the Past Chair was thanked for his work over the previous eight years. In March 2024, the Board of Trustees published its new *Strategic Plan 2024-2026: Towards our 70th Anniversary*. This left no time for implementation during FY 2023/24, but the Board of Trustees committed itself to delivering the strategy, utilising external advice as may be needed, and with periodical reviews of its effectiveness.

The key management personnel of the charity are the Trustees, assisted by a part-time Administrator, Sarah Vergette. The Trustees are committed to training to support the effective development of the Trustees and of the Society. The Society relies heavily on the voluntary work of the Trustees and others who make a vital contribution to the Society and for which the Society is grateful. The Society is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and adheres to a policy to this effect.

Operations

Climate change, rising seas, biodiversity loss and other major challenges to the landscape have created concern about society's ability to adapt to an uncertain future in the Broads. As the *Voice for the Broads*, we bring our members and partners together to consult, collaborate and campaign towards newly identified, shared goals. Our approach is inclusive and collegiate, and we believe in a credible, thoughtful and constructive approach.

The Society has significant strengths, including a proud campaigning history and a supportive membership that shares an inclusive and holistic approach to the Broads economy, landscape, ecology and heritage. To successfully reach our objectives, we recognise that changes are needed. We are reviewing our constitution and governance and improving our financial base. Crucially, we are delivering better services to our members, building our support base, extending our influence through strategic alliances, and improving our communications in an era when social media are key.

In future, the Society will provide a wider range of benefits to its members and the public, such as campaigning and advocacy, awareness-raising, information, publications, field events and visits, indoor events including presentations, briefings, lectures, debates and conferences, opportunities to scrutinise planning applications and to volunteer in many arenas.

We will begin to deliver an enhanced programme of public benefits on three themes:

- *Recreation*, appealing to those interested in boating and paddleboarding, walking, angling, birdwatching, natural history, swimming, photography and all other outdoor pursuits appropriate to the Broads, to encourage health and wellbeing, and to advocate maintenance and improvement of the navigation infrastructure, including sustainability and accessibility for all.
- *Environment*, including enhanced awareness of the climate and biodiversity crises and the need for nature recovery; constant improvements in controlling pollution and habitat loss; advocacy for the mitigation of drought and flood in the Broads, for the protection of habitats and wildlife; and promotion of the Broads environment nationally and internationally.
- *Heritage*, including review of all national policies, local plans and planning applications; improved awareness of the Broads economic and built heritage; support and advocacy towards heritage restoration and conservation programmes; visits to heritage buildings and centres of artisanal craftsmanship; and presentations or debates on the history and importance of the Broads Heritage nationally and internationally.

Administration and Finance

The Broads Society has one part-time Administrator, no property other than a part-share in a listed wooden building (the Eel Sett at Candle Dyke) and modest financial assets. The organisation's strength lies in its members from whom the Society draws its Board of Trustees, committee members and volunteers.

The Board of Trustees will normally meet in odd-numbered months of the year and Committees in even-numbered months. Committees may include volunteers as well as Trustees. Committee Chairs are Trustees and report to the Board. The Annual General Meeting is held within nine months of the end of the financial year and Extraordinary General Meetings are held as needed.

In 2024 the Society has:

- Adopted and began to implement the widely respected Charity Governance Code.
- Brought forward options for improvements to the constitution aimed at managing governance and liability in the framework of the Charity Commission.
- Attracted new Trustees and implemented procedures for induction and training.
- Established policies on conduct, health & safety, equality, diversity & inclusion, privacy, safeguarding, complaints, GDPR and other matters.
- Created and empowered five Committees of the Board, addressing Administration & Finance; Marketing & Communications; Activities & Events; Broads Guardians (volunteering) and Planning.
- Begun consultations with stakeholders and members through opinion surveys.

Expenditure was nearly £3k higher than in the previous year, mainly because of the rising cost of *Harnser*, conferences, stationery, printing and advertising. The Society covered its expenses from membership dues, Gift Aid and interest (ca. 75% of income) and unplanned, unsolicited gifts and legacies (ca. 25%). As we approach our 70th anniversary in 2026, we aim to cover all budgeted costs from membership dues and utilise additional resources for projects and events to achieve our objectives. We aim to raise funds by:

- Increasing the number of members and subscription income by 20%.
- Increasing Parish Council and corporate memberships based on clear benefits.
- Increasing membership of recreational organisations, also based on clear benefits.
- Applying for governmental and philanthropic grants in support of the Society.
- Appealing to members for voluntary donations and legacy commitments to extend our work.

The Society had 715 memberships at 31 March 2024. These comprise 348 individual, 144 joint, 192 life, 2 club, 14 corporate, and 15 Parish Council memberships. We have seven members outside the UK. Since April 2024, the Society has gained twenty-three additional memberships, including four life and one corporate membership.

Marketing & Communications

The Society communicates via email, social media and videoconference, and publishes a quarterly 48-page A5 magazine, *Harnser*, which goes out to all members by post and to corporate members as a PDF. The Society refreshed its website in January 2024 and published a dozen informative, well-researched and popular blogs in the run-up to *World Wetlands Day* on 2 February. The new website also includes Society policies, news from partners and stakeholders, and other information. A newly formed Marketing & Communications Committee has begun to prepare a strategy, including a brand guide.

The Society regularly displays its aims and membership opportunities at events in the Broads, including the Horning Boat Show, the Royal Norfolk Show, the Lions Annual Fair in Hoveton, the 'Lets Fish' events at Potter Heigham and the North Walsham & Dilham Canal fete, amongst others.

Each year the Society offers two prestigious awards. In November 2023 the *Lady Mayhew Trophy* and £250.00 Prize were awarded to the *First Blofield & Brundall Sea Scouts*. The *Broads Society Award* was not awarded. The Society runs a lottery for members, called the *500 Club*, to raise additional income. This year the draw was won by Mr R.W. Green of Harlow in Essex.

Planning

Between the AGM in November 2023 and August 2024, the Society received more than 175 planning consultations from the Broads Authority and responded to 39 deemed to be important for the protection of the character and amenity of the Broads or promoting sustainable economic development. The Planning Committee also submitted comments on two consultation stages of the Broads Local Plan as well as Draft Neighbourhood Plans for Geldeston and Gillingham, and Belton with Browston, Burgh Castle, and Fritton with St Olaves; further Government consultations on the National Planning Policy Framework; proposed changes to Permitted Development Rights; and on the Norfolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

Activities & Events

At the close of FY 2023/24 a new Committee was formed to elaborate and implement a new programme of activities and events for the Society, in line with its strategic plan. The programme will include indoor and outdoor events covering recreation, environment and heritage. Key elements running through the Society's events will be opportunities to discover new information about the Broads, to visit unusual or inaccessible places and to ensure that members' voices are heard in the debate on Broads futures.

Broads Guardians (volunteering)

The Society's longstanding volunteering programme, BroadSword was closed at the end of the financial year. A new volunteering programme, Broads Guardians, has since been designed and will be implemented. The Broads Guardians programme will provide an umbrella structure within which various volunteer groups will operate, utilising shared policies and procedures for risk assessment and management, inclusion, division of labour, health and safety and other key elements of a contemporary volunteering infrastructure. A Broads Guardians Committee is in a formative phase, focussing initially on reedbed management and angling.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Notes	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
INCOMING RESOURCES			
Incoming resources from generated funds			
Voluntary income:			
Donations and subscriptions	2	33,146	11,731
Activity generated income			
Merchandise & competitions	3	1,405	1,749
Bank interest		1,119	415
Advertising income		949	862
Total incoming resources		<u>36,619</u>	<u>14,757</u>
RESOURCES EXPENDED			
Costs of generating funds	4	1,028	1,600
Charitable activities	4	18,936	15,497
Governance costs	4	150	150
Total resources expended		<u>20,114</u>	<u>17,247</u>
NET (OUTGOING)/INCOMING RESOURCES		16,505	-2,307
Fund balances brought forward		<u>27,315</u>	<u>29,805</u>
Fund balances carried forward		<u>43,820</u>	<u>27,315</u>
		2024 £	2023 £
Current assets			
Cash at bank			
Current accounts		3,235	849
Business premium account		18,074	5,006
COIF charities deposit fund		22,511	21,460
General fund		<u>43,820</u>	<u>27,315</u>



Dr N. M. Collins
Chair of Trustees

Date : 31 August 2024

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2023 to 31 MARCH 2024

1. Principal Accounting Policies

- (a) Basis of accounting: The accounts are produced on a receipts and payments basis.
 (b) Fund accounting: Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity.
 (c) Incoming resources: All income is included in the statement of financial activities when it is received.
 (d) Resources expended: Expenditure is included in the statement of financial activities when it is paid for.

The cost of generating funds relates to the costs associated with attracting voluntary income and the costs of trading for fundraising purposes.

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Governance costs include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include the independent examination fee and costs linked to strategic management of the charity.

All costs are allocated between these expenditure categories of the statement of financial activities on a basis designed to reflect the use of the resource.

2. Donations	2024	2023
	£	£
Donations and legacies	21,472	329
Subscriptions – annual	9,028	8,652
Gift aid tax refund	1,984	1,350
500 Club donation	662	1,400
	<u>33,146</u>	<u>11,731</u>

3. Merchandise and Competitions	2024	2023
	£	
Income – sale of goods	1,405	1,349
prize money donated	0	400
Expenditure – cost of purchases	-1,028	-1120
prize money & printing costs	0	480
	<u>377</u>	<u>-346</u>

4. Other Direct Charitable Expenses

	Notes	Costs of generating funds £	Other charitable activities £	Governance £	Total 2024 £	2023
Costs directly allocated to activities						
Subscriptions	5		700		1,371	954
Goods for resale		1,028			1,028	1120
Independent examination				150	150	150
Awards			250		250	250
AGM, shows & events			1,286		1,286	502
Support Costs Allocated to Activities						
Wages			8,000		8,000	7,833

Insurance	383		383	876
Bank charges	0		0	1
Meeting expenditure and travel	60		60	76
Conference attendance costs	671		0	365
Harnser – printing and postage	5,991		5,991	5,025
Postage and telephone	272		272	60
Printing, stationery and advertising	1,288		1,288	465
Misc. including ICO	35		35	182
	1,028	18,936	150	20,114
				17,247

5. Subscriptions

	2024	2023
	£	£
Campaign for National Parks	518	890
Inland Waterways Association	69	54
Friends of Hunter Fleet	25	10
Magazines Direct	88	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	<u>700</u>	<u>954</u>

6. Trustee Remuneration

The Board were not entitled to and received no remuneration during the period. Board members are reimbursed for expenses incurred in connection with Society work. No expenses were claimed by any Board or Committee member during the year.

No trustee or other person related to the charity had any personal interest in any contract or transaction entered into by the charity during the year.

ENDS