



## ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2022-2023



**Cobthorn Open Day**



**Winter Wonderland Workshop**



**Slow Worm Hibemaculum at Cobthorn**



**Littlewood Fungus Walk**



## **Structure, Governance and Management**

The Charity was registered on 2 July 1999. The group was previously known as Friends of Biddle Street SSSI, which was an informal association with management responsibilities for an area of land in the parishes of Yatton and Congresbury in North Somerset. Membership of the Charity is open to individuals and organisations who are interested in furthering the work of the Charity and who have paid any subscription laid down from time to time by the Executive Committee.

The Charity has a qualified accountant from its membership as Honorary Treasurer. This gives an appropriate level of expertise to develop budgetary, financial risk and investment policies and systems. In addition, we have obtained the services of a qualified accountant to act as independent examiner of the accounts

The Executive Committee has formed an Education and Outreach sub-committee to supplement the work of its existing Land Management sub-committee. It is exploring and developing opportunities to bring individuals and the community closer to nature especially with outcomes for health and well-being.

## **Objectives and Activities**

The Charity's objects are to establish and maintain nature reserves in the parishes of Yatton and Congresbury for the benefit of the public and to advance education in natural history and nature conservation.

YACWAG has an active membership with a wide array of relevant skills and expertise in voluntary organisation and nature conservation.

Membership of the Charity has been maintained at approximately 250 and the YACWAG Facebook Group reached 705 members.

In addition to fundraising volunteers organise practical work parties, walks, talks, school visits, events, species surveys and training.

YACWAG provides advice and support to local landowners, individuals, other voluntary organisations and community groups on conservation issues. In addition, YACWAG works with a wide network of agencies and voluntary organisations involved with nature conservation in North Somerset. It is represented on the Strawberry Line management committee and continues strong links with North Somerset Council in the management of the Local Nature Reserve. We work closely with Natural England in connection with water quality issues on Biddle Street SSSI and planning issues associated with the North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC supplementary planning document. We work with the Hawk and Owl Trust and the BTO in monitoring local bird populations especially Barn Owl and Kestrel on YACWAG reserves. The charity works with owners of land in Kings Wood in monitoring Dormouse and Greater Horseshoe Bat populations. We also provide advice and guidance to small land holders and others interested in wildlife friendly gardening in the local community.

## **Achievements and Performance 2022/2023**

YACWAG's financial position remains strong with sufficient reserves to meet its contingent liabilities and further its charitable objectives. The receipt of a substantial bequest has enabled the charity to place a deposit to purchase a field adjacent to its new Cobthorn Reserve thereby creating a larger area under positive management for the Greater Horseshoe Bat. Completion is expected in April 2023.

The lifting of all COVID restrictions enabled the charity to fully engage again with its volunteers, members and communities through a diverse programme of activities commencing with an Open Day in May at the Cobthorn Reserve. Children's activities and the opportunity to meet the rare breed sheep and cattle at close quarters attracted over 100 visitors and spread the message of "Nature is your Neighbour". The event concluded with a bat walk. The bat conservation theme was continued with stalls at Yatton Schools annual fete and Congresbury Village Fete during the summer. The display at the latter attracting a prize for the best dressed stall. A bat walk on Cadbury Hill LNR was attended by over 30 people.

Four bat transects were undertaken in the summer for the Bat Conservation Trust Field and Waterway surveys as part of the National Bat Monitoring Programme.

A new information board was erected at the Strawberry Line Junction Nature reserve sponsored by Bristol Airport and Yatton WI Strawberry Hearts depicting nature and railway history.

During the year YACWAG was sponsored by North Somerset Council and Sport England to deliver a programme of 12 Wellness Walks to places of nature interest including its reserves.

A landowner in Kingston Seymour provided an evening walk to see wild flowers in the fields and their management for barn owls. YACWAG volunteers also led other walks throughout the year including an around the reserves' itinerary giving people an opportunity to view all YAGWAG reserves in a day, a fungus walk at Littlewood and a New Year's Day walk in conjunction with Cleeve church.

Over the autumn and winter three talks were organised through zoom on the subjects of Fungi at Littlewood, Regenerative Farming and the conservation of Swifts. The latter promoted YACWAG's action programme to save swifts locally.

YACWAG initiated two projects with North Somerset Council to improve the biodiversity of the Strawberry Line. At Congresbury a volunteer led project to improve the disused station was undertaken with the dual purpose of restoring the platforms and improving wildlife habitat. Three work parties were organised for this purpose involving over thirty people living in the locality. At Yatton work was carried out to remove a large area of scrub and level ground to improve drainage and create a wild flower bank. A litter pick along the line was also organised.

Work parties were organised at Cobthorn for the purpose of carrying out tree and hedge maintenance.



## ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

On YACWAG reserves the annual programme of checking and maintaining bird boxes was carried out. Volunteers continued with their work to monitor breeding Kestrel and Barn Owl nests in conjunction with the Hawk and Owl Trust. Work was also carried out to replace and reposition boxes. There were regular seasonal surveys carried out within the two parishes including the Strawberry Line and YACWAG reserves. Volunteers attended St Andrews school to organise the RSPB Big Schools Bird Watch and the BTO Rook Survey.

YACWAG repeated its Window Wanderland event in the two parishes to celebrate nature through art with the theme Brilliant British Birds. This again proved popular and included the participation of businesses in making up displays in the windows of over 60 homes and premises including the local library.

YACWAG has also responded to the concerns of its members and the local community about the impact of development and attended two planning inquiries to represent their views concerning the likely threats to the local natural environment especially habitat for the Greater Horseshoe Bat.



## INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 March 2023.

### Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under Section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an Independent Examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### Basis of the Independent Examiner's Report

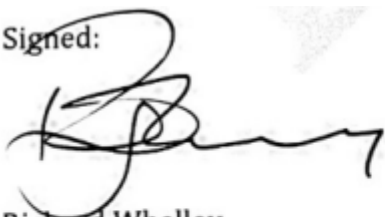
My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

### Independent Examiner's Statement

In the course of my examination no matter has come to my attention:

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

Signed:



Richard Whalley  
124 New Road,  
Stoke Gifford, BS34 8TF.

Date:

6 June 2023

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

The total receipts of the charity in the financial year were £186,274 (2020/21 £92,306).

The expenditure amounted to £17,549 (2020/21 £20,137).

Total funds carried forward at the end of the year were £283,365.

The Committee is satisfied that sufficient reserves are held at the present time.

The Executive Committee is required to comply with its obligations under the Charities Act and Charities SORP 2005 with regard to the preparation of financial statements and is satisfied that it has so complied. The Committee acknowledges that it is responsible for the keeping of proper accounting records and for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

In line with the decision of the Charity Trustees last year the accounting year runs from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 and the previous years accounts are shown restated to reflect a 12-month period for comparison along with the formally published position.


The significant increase in receipts this year arose from the receipt of a bequest, which is going to support the objectives of the charity through the acquisition of additional land to extend our current reserves. This acquisition is going through due process at the end of the financial year and the solicitor is holding funds in their client account to enable the completion of this transaction.

## COMPARATIVE FINANCIAL POSITION

	2022/23	2021/22	2021/22 restated*
Total Receipts	186,274	92,306	91,290
Total expenditure	17,549	20,137	20,111
Net Revenue	168,725	72,169	71,179
Total Funds Carried Forward	283,365	114,640	114,640

Note. (\*) The 2021/22 position has been restated to show a 12 months comparison (1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022) to enable direct comparison with the equivalent 2022/23 period

The above report was approved by the Executive Committee on 26 April 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



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A Moulin  
Chairperson

The notes on page 10 form an integral part of these accounts.

## ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

RECEIPTS	Restricted Funds (£)	Designated/ Unrestricted Funds (£)	Totals 2022/23 (£)	Totals 2021/22 (£) (13months)	Totals 2021/22 (£) (Restated - 12months)
Subscriptions		1,518	1,518	1,477	845
Donations - Paid with Subscriptions		128	128	568	345
Other Donations & Events	100	172,962	173,062	1,924	1,814
Give As You Live & EveryClick Donations		214	214	123	106
Gift Aid		458	458	635	635
Publications		7	7	235	235
Clothing		11	11	31	31
Rural Payments Agency		5,690	5,690	5,388	5,388
Grants	4,500	0	4,500	2,800	2,800
S106 Income		0	0	79,000	79,000
Bank Interest		687	687	125	91
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>4,600</b>	<b>181,674</b>	<b>186,274</b>	<b>92,306</b>	<b>91,290</b>

### Subscriptions

At the start of 2023 the Executive Committee agreed to re-establish Life Membership for YACWAG at a new rate of a one-off payment of £200. In addition, we agreed to move to a variable rates of annual membership fees based on households. The three rates were set at £5, £10 and £15. This flexible approach is seen as supportive of the community in the current economic situation.

PAYMENTS	Restricted Funds (£)	Designated/ Unrestricted Funds (£)	Totals 2022/23 (£)	Totals 2021/22 (£) (13months)	Totals 2021/22 (£) (Restated - 12months)
<b>Direct Charitable Payments</b>					
YACWAG Reserves Management	26	11,709	11,734	11,959	11,992
Strawberry Line Work	106	2,639	2,745	4,835	4,835
Bird Projects	0	906	906	128	128
Bat Projects	0	0	0	90	90
Insect Projects	0	102	102	228	228
Tree Projects	0	0	0	84	84
Education & Training	100	857	957	348	348
Annual Drainage Rate	0	112	112	111	111
Tools and Equipment	0	21	21	64	64
Insurance	0	266	266	267	267
Events	0	0	0	211	161
<b>Other Payments</b>					
Stationery & Supplies	0	65	65	99	99
Meetings	0	0	0	143	143
Publications	0	0	0	105	100
Transaction Fees	0	31	31	22	19
Professional Fees	0	609	609	1,443	1,443
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>17,317</b>	<b>17,549</b>	<b>20,137</b>	<b>20,111</b>



MONETARY ASSETS	Restricted Funds at 31/03/2023 (£)	Designated/ Unrestricted Funds at 31/03/2023 (£)	Totals at 31/03/2023 (£)	Totals at 31/03/2022 (£)
<b>Balance at Bank</b>				
Lloyds Current Account	369	6,706	7,074	16,567
Lloyds Savings Account	4,500	62,910	67,410	70,201
Charity Bank	512	69,417	69,929	19,620
Paypal		128	128	221
Petty Cash		48	48	20
Triodos Social Venture		32,899	32,899	2,899
Triodos Deposit Account		5,136	5,136	5,112
Solicitors Client Account		100,740	100,740	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,381</b>	<b>277,984</b>	<b>283,365</b>	<b>114,640</b>

### New Bank Accounts

No new bank accounts have been opened. Although currently £100,740 is lodged in the Client Account of the Solicitors pending completion of the purchase of additional land. This transaction is expected to complete in the early months of the new financial year

### Fixed Assets held by the Charity

- 10 Acre field on Congresbury Moor, purchased in 1999.
- 2 additional fields (New Croft and Meakers) on Congresbury Moor, purchased in 2000.
- Phippens (field) on Congresbury Moor, purchased in November 2001.
- Littlewood (woodland), Claverham Drove, Kenn Moor, purchased in 2003.
- 2 fields off Stowey Road, Yatton, purchased in 2006.
- 2 fields off Kenn Moor Road, Yatton, purchased in 2006.
- Footmead (field) on Congresbury Moor, purchased in 2007.
- Nortons, field on Congresbury Moor, purchased in 2009.
- Harry's Plot off Claverham Close, Claverham, bequeathed in 2017.
- Cobthorn Reserve, fields off Cobthorn Way, Congresbury transferred under a S106 arrangement in February 2022

The freehold title to the above properties, with the exception of Nortons and Cobthorn, is held on trust for the Charity by the Official Custodian for Charities.

### Contingent Liability

The land off Moor Lane known as Nortons is subject to a legal charge in perpetuity of 58.3% of the sale price in the event of any sale.

YACWAG also holds conservation tools and equipment with an estimated value of £4,314

  
A Moulin Chairperson

9/6/23

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

### 1 Receipts and Payments Basis

Section 133 of the Charities Act 2011 allows a charity to prepare a 'receipts and payments account' for the year and a 'statement of assets and liabilities' at the year-end instead of preparing full accounts for a particular financial year on condition that in the financial year the charity's gross recorded income was £250,000 or less and it is not a company.

As this charity's income for the financial year was less than £250,000 the Committee has decided to prepare accounts on this basis.

### 2 Restricted and Committed Funds

	Balance 31.03.22 £	Funds Received £	Funds Expended £	Balance 31.03.23 £
Junction Reserve Project (Bristol Airport & Yatton WI*)	267	0	106	161
Bat Projects (Middlecombe Nursery)	246	0	0	246
Winter Wanderland 22/23(Yatton PC)	0	100	100	0
Wellness Walks (Wesport)	0	4,500	0	4,500
Cobthorn Reserve (Vistry Limited)	500	0	26	474
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,013</b>	<b>4,600</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>5,381</b>

YACWAG has no outstanding contractual commitments at the 31 March 2023.

### 3 Designated Funds

YACWAG has designated funds of £37,716 at the 31 March 2023 largely to cover future estimated costs for the Cobthorn Reserve (£36,745). As agreed by the Trustees the designated funds for the Cobthorn Reserve will be reassessed triennially to ensure adequate reserves are sustained.

### 4 Independent Examiner's Fee

The Independent Examiner has agreed to carry out this service for no charge.

### 5 Employees

The Charity has no employees and has therefore not incurred staff costs during the period.

### 6 Transactions with Trustees

No member of the Committee received any remuneration during the period. The only payments to members of the Committee were in respect of reimbursement of expenditure incurred on behalf of the charity.