



**ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED
31 MARCH 2024**



Photos:

1. Erecting Swift Boxes
2. The Swift migration game
3. Installing Owl protection
4. Bat box checking
5. Tree planting at Cobthorn



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Statutory Information

Registered Charity Number 1076362
Working Name YACWAG
Governing Document Constitution adopted 18 February 1999
with amendments agreed on 28 June 1999 and 23 May
2018 and a further amendment was made on 6 July 2022.

Executive Committee

Chairperson A Moulin
Vice Chairperson R Croucher
Secretary C Moore
Treasurer L Millar
Committee R Ashley (resigned 28 June 23)
L Bourton (elected 28 June 23)
C Tennant (elected 28 June 23)
M Harrison
S Lovesey
J Clayden
R Wood (Yatton Parish Council)
T Daw (Congresbury Parish Council)(appointed 28 June 23)

Landholding Trustees:

Nortons A Moulin, T Riddle
Harry's Plot – off Claverham Close A Moulin, R Croucher
Cobthorn Reserve A Moulin, R Croucher
Cobthorn Paddocks A Moulin, R Croucher

Custodian Trustee The Official Custodian for Charities

Bankers Lloyds TSB plc, Weston-super-Mare branch
Charity Bank, Tonbridge.
Triodos Bank, Bristol.

Independent Examiner Richard Whalley (ACMA).

Solicitors Wards Solicitors, 1-3 Alexandra Road,
Clevedon, BS21 7QF & Merryweather Williams, 31 College
Street, Burnham, TA8 1AS.

Website www.yacwag.org.uk



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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 Events 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.

Achievements and Performance 2023/2024

YACWAG's financial position continues to be strong with reserves to meet its liabilities and achieve charitable objectives for both the short and longer term. The charity has updated its online membership system to enable more efficient subscription payments and improve communication about events and volunteering. Membership rates have been kept to a minimum to permit inclusive access to all across the communities.

The receipt of a substantial bequest in 2022-23 has enabled the charity to purchase a field in 2023-24, adjacent to its Cobthorn Reserve creating a larger area that will be brought under positive management for Horseshoe Bats within the North Somerset and Mendip Bats Special Area for Conservation (SAC). YACWAG has registered the land with North Somerset Council's Habitat Bank for the purpose of providing Habitat Environment Plan (HEP) offsetting thereby securing long-term funding opportunities to provide habitat enhancement and maintenance of



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the new Cobthorn Paddocks reserve for the next thirty years. YACWAG worked with North Somerset Council and Natural England on this provision which came into being as a result of new legislation in January 2024 requiring Biodiversity Net Gain on all new development.

The extension to the Cobthorn Reserve has provided further opportunities for volunteering and study. The proximity to residential housing in Congresbury not only helps raise the charity's profile but also makes the site ideal for engaging the local community in regard to YACWAG's charitable objectives.

Working with the Forest of Avon Trees for Climate initiative, thirty volunteers planted forty-six trees over both fields with the aim of creating wood pasture, a favoured habitat of the Greater Horseshoe Bat. An old hedge boundary was also reinstated with plants donated by the Woodland Trust. YACWAG licensed volunteers extended their dormice and small mammal survey to the new field.

Engagement with YACWAG members and the community was a key objective throughout the year and a diverse mixture of events, volunteering opportunities, talks and walks were delivered. In both Yatton and Congresbury a new Swift Project engaged with local people with 20 nest boxes put up in locations likely to attract swifts.

In February 2024 the Window Wanderland with the theme "Nature as Your Neighbour" was again met with a good response as in the two previous years with over sixty homes and businesses participating in the two parishes.

YACWAG attended an event organised to promote voluntary opportunities at a new housing estate North End, Yatton, held in Chestnut Park School.

Practical conservation work is recognised for its many benefits for health. Volunteer work parties initiated with North Somerset Council to improve the biodiversity of the Strawberry Line Local Nature Reserve continued. The work at Congresbury Station site included clearing vegetation from a pond and reed bed. A flower bank has now been seeded and plans formulated to reduce anti-social behaviour at the Junction Reserve near Yatton Station agreed. A hay raking work party at Kenn Moor Orchard concluded with cider – thanks to Thatchers – or a soft drink for all volunteers who had watered the trees throughout the season.

YACWAG's funded programme of Access to Nature walks to reduce social isolation, improve mental and physical health concluded with four visits to Cadbury Hill, the Strawberry Line, Goblin Combe and Kings Wood and focused on bats, grasshoppers, woodland and dormice respectively.

Three annual Spring, Summer and Winter bird walks also took place on Cadbury Hill and the Strawberry Line Local Nature Reserves. These are important nature hotspots and YACWAG continues to promote their importance and conservation. A nature walk along the Strawberry Line was also organised for the Strawberry Line Cafe Club, a group primarily for the over 50's. A family bat walk at Cadbury Hill in May 2023 attracted thirty two people of all ages.



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A programme of dormice survey walks at Kings Wood had its inaugural session in March 2024 with the aim of providing close encounters with this elusive species. After a break of three years, two general knowledge quizzes were held at the Plough Inn, Congresbury to provide a fundraising opportunity and social event for members.

Two Midsummer walks at Kingston Seymour were hosted on a member's farm to look at wild flower meadows and a project to create woodland.

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.

An annual programme of checking and maintaining bird boxes was carried out. Monitoring breeding Kestrel and Barn Owl nests was undertaken in conjunction with the Hawk and Owl Trust. Regular seasonal bird surveys were carried within the two parishes on YACWAG reserves and the Strawberry Line LNR.

Working with young people featured strongly in YACWAG's work. YACWAG delivered four sessions for Yatton Schools Learning College Nature Detectives Module on birds, owls, bats and Nature as Your Neighbour. Stalls were provided for Yatton School Carnival, Court de Wyck School Fete, Congresbury Village Fete and Congresbury Christmas Fare. A barn owl pellet dissection session was provided for the Congresbury Youth Partnership.

YACWAG successfully applied for a grant from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Community grant of £10,220 to improve pride in place and increase life chances by encouraging greater engagement with nature, which will be received in the current year. This Nature On Your Doorstep project is being delivered over twelve months in partnership with Congresbury Youth Club and After-School Club.

YACWAG supported an undergraduate project for a student resident in Yatton to investigate water quality issues on Biddle Street SSSI. The survey was conducted on YACWAG reserves and results from the study will be passed onto Natural England to inform their monitoring programme.

YACWAG was consulted by the Environment Agency about its mitigation off-setting proposals for its Gooseum reservoir project on the Millennium Green in Congresbury which would have an impact on the Bats SAC.

National Grid also entered into discussion with YACWAG about undergrounding overhead cables on the Cobthorn reserve which would be likely to benefit bat flyways within the SAC. YACWAG made comment to Natural England about both matters.

YACWAG responded to the concerns of the local community about the impact of development on two sites in Yatton and their likely impact on the SAC habitat for Horseshoe Bats by making representations to North Somerset Council and Natural England. YACWAG also made comments to North Somerset Council and Yatton Parish Council on concerns expressed about



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the management of a closed church yard and generally about herbicide spraying in streets and open spaces. Concern was also expressed to the parish council about the likely impact on Biddle Street SSSI should a decision be made to build a bypass around Yatton.

A programme of talks in the winter and autumn had topics covering grasshopper ecology, YACWAG reserves and regenerative farming at Watercress Farm.

The Annual General Meeting was held in June 2023 at Middlecombe Nursery, Congresbury followed by a walk to the new Paddocks reserve.



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INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 March 2024.

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:

Date:

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



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FINANCIAL REVIEW

The total receipts of the charity in the financial year were £22,420 (2022/23 £186,274).
The expenditure amounted to £129,226¹ (2022/23 £17,549).
Total funds carried forward at the end of the year were £176,559.
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.

The accounting period covers activity from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

As stated in last year's accounts the significant increase in expenditure this year arose from the utilisation, via land purchase, of a bequest, in support of the objectives of the charity.

COMPARATIVE FINANCIAL POSITION

	2023/24	2022/23
Total Receipts	22,420	186,274
Total expenditure	129,226	17,549
Net Revenue	-106,806	168,725
Total Funds Carried Forward	176,559	283,365

The above report was approved by the Executive Committee on 17 April 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

A Moulin
Chairperson

The notes on page 12 form an integral part of these accounts.

¹ This expenditure included land purchase of £101,965



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RECEIPTS	Restricted Funds (£)	Designated/ Unrestricted Funds (£)	Totals 2023/24 (£)	Totals 2022/23 (£)
Subscriptions		2,342	2,342	1,518
Donations - Paid with Subscriptions		204	204	128
Other Donations & Events		925	925	173,062
Give As You Live & EveryClick Donations		87	87	214
Gift Aid		384	384	458
Publications		0	0	7
Clothing		57	57	11
Meeting Receipts		464	464	
Rural Payments Agency		5,346	5,346	5,690
Grants	9,775	150	9,925	4,500
S106 Income		0	0	0
Bank Interest		2,686	2,686	687
TOTAL RECEIPTS	9,775	12,645	22,420	186,274

Subscriptions

The subscription rates have remained unaltered through the course of the year with individuals being able to take out life membership at a rate of £200 or annual membership at a rate of £5, £10 or £15 with the member able to decide what level of contribution they wish to make. In the course of the year we have adopted a membership software tool, to make managing the membership simpler and more responsive.



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PAYMENTS	Restricted Funds (£)	Designated/ Unrestricted Funds (£)	Totals 2023/24 (£)	Totals 2022/23 (£)
Direct Charitable Payments				
Land Purchase Costs	0	0	101,965	0
YACWAG Reserve Management - Scheme	0	1,193	1,193	5,898
YACWAG Reserve Management - Non Scheme	9,754	8,098	17,853	5,836
Strawberry Line Work	161	1,679	1,840	2,745
Bird Projects	0	314	314	906
Bat Projects	0	38	38	0
Insect Projects	0	0	0	102
Tree Projects	0	0	0	0
Education & Training	4,995	-903	4,092	957
Annual Drainage Rate	0	125	125	112
Tools and Equipment	0	7	7	21
Insurance	0	252	252	266
Events	0	164	164	0
Other Payments				
Stationery & Supplies	0	112	112	65
Meetings	0	30	30	0
Publications	0	0	0	0
Transaction Fees	0	72	72	31
Professional Fees	0	1,171	1,171	609
TOTAL PAYMENTS	14,910	12,351	129,226	17,549

MONETARY ASSETS	Restricted Funds at 31/03/2024 (£)	Designated/ Unrestricted Funds at 31/03/2024 (£)	Totals at 31/03/2024 (£)	Totals at 31/03/2023 (£)
Balance at Bank				
Lloyds Current Account	0	11,858	11,858	7,074
Lloyds Savings Account	246	54,353	54,599	67,410
Charity Bank	0	71,821	71,821	69,929
Paypal	0	140	140	128
Petty Cash	0	0	0	48
Triodos Social Venture	0	32,899	32,899	32,899
Triodos Deposit Account	0	5,241	5,241	5,136
Solicitors Client Account	0	0	0	100,740
TOTAL	246	176,313	176,559	283,365

New Bank Accounts

No new bank accounts have been opened.

Fixed Assets held by the Charity

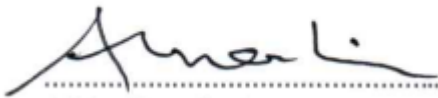
- 10 Acre field on Congresbury Moor, purchased in 1999 for £24,900 plus costs.
- 2 additional fields (New Croft and Meakers) on Congresbury Moor, purchased in 2000 for £17,725 plus costs.
- Phippens (field) on Congresbury Moor, purchased in November 2001 for £5000 plus costs.
- Littlewood (woodland), Claverham Drove, Kenn Moor, purchased in 2003 for £19,000 plus costs.
- 2 fields off Stowey Road, Yatton, purchased in 2006 for £25,000 plus costs.
- 2 fields off Kenn Moor Road, Yatton, purchased in 2006 for £42,700 plus costs.
- Footmead (field) on Congresbury Moor, purchased in 2007 for £4,000 plus costs.
- Nortons, field on Congresbury Moor, purchased in 2009 for £12,000 plus costs.
- Harry's Plot off Claverham Close, Claverham, bequeathed in 2017.
- Cobthorn Reserve, fields off Cobthorn Way, Congresbury transferred under a S106 arrangement at no cost in February 2022
- Cobthorn Paddocks, purchased in 2023, for £100,000 plus costs

The freehold title to the above properties, with the exception of Nortons, Harry's Plot, Cobthorn Reserve and Cobthorn Paddocks, 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 £1,030



A Moulin Chairperson



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 31.03.23 £	Funds Received £	Funds Expended £	Balance 31.03.24 £
Junction Reserve Project (Bristol Airport & Yatton WI*)	161	0	161	0
Bat Projects (Middlecombe Nursery)	246	0	0	246
Wellness Walks (Wesport)	4,500	495	4,995	0
Cobthorn Reserve (Vistry Limited)	474	0	474	0
Trees for Climate	0	9,280	9,280	
TOTAL	5,381	9,775	14,910	246

YACWAG has no outstanding contractual commitments at the 31 March 2024.

3 Designated Funds

YACWAG has designated funds of £33,947 at the 31 March 2024 largely to cover future estimated costs for the Cobthorn Reserve (£33,736). As agreed by the Trustees the designated funds for the Cobthorn Reserve will be reassessed triennially to ensure adequate reserves are sustained, with the next review due by 31 March 2025.

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.