

OVA



The Otter Valley Association

TRUSTEES' REPORT

for the year ended 31 March 2012

Reference and administrative information

Name of Charity: Otter Valley Association
Correspondence address: PO Box 70, Budleigh Salterton, EX9 6WN
Registered Charity No: 278266
Independent Examiner: Brian Leveridge,

Trustees

The following people served as Trustees during the year:

Nicola Daniel	Chairman (Acting)
Haylor Lass	Vice Chairman (Acting) and Newton Popleford
Roger Saunders	Hon. Treasurer
David Daniel	Hon. Secretary (Acting)
Patrick Hamilton	Natural Environment
Nicola Daniel	Events
David Daniel	History
Robert Wiltshire	Assistant Minutes Secretary
Clive Bowman	Membership
Lynne Wright	Publicity
Mo Bowman	Publicity
John Winson	Otterton
<i>vacancy</i>	Colaton Raleigh
Christine Hadley	East Budleigh
George Maddaford	Budleigh Salterton
John Jones	Budleigh Salterton and Walks Organiser

By order of the Trustees

Chairman (Acting)

Independent Examiner's Report
to the Trustees of The Otter Valley Association
Charity No: 278266

I report on the accounts of the Otter Valley Association for the year ended 31 March 2012.

Respective Responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 43(2) Of the Charities Act 1993 (the 1993 Act) and that an independent examination is required.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts (under section 43(3)(a) of the 1993 Act);
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 43(7)(b) of the 1993); and
- to 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 Commissioners. 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 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 I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

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 trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that:
 - proper accounting records are kept (in accordance with section 41 of the Act); and
 - accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

19th April 2012

Brian Leveridge
Independent Examiner

Aims

The Otter Valley Association was established in 1979 as a civic amenity society covering the civil parishes of Budleigh Salterton, East Budleigh with Bicton, Otterton, Colaton Raleigh, Newton Poppleford and Harpford.

Its principal aims are:

- To promote high standards of planning and architecture
- To educate the public in local geography, history, natural history and architecture
- To secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest
- To conserve, protect and restore natural features of ecological or scientific importance.

Organisation

The OVA's activities are governed by a written Constitution, which sets out its objects and regulations. It is registered with the Charity Commission, and is subject to the legislation applicable to charities, in particular The Charities Act 2006. (The Charities Act 2011 is soon to be implemented). A copy of the Constitution is always available on request and can be downloaded from our website www.ova.org.uk.

Management

The management and administration of the OVA is carried out by the Executive Committee, which this year met ten times. This Committee normally consists of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Secretary, and up to twelve other members of the Association. Members of the Executive Committee, all of whom are Charity Trustees, are elected annually at the Annual General Meeting. They include representatives from each parish. The names of those who served as Trustees during the year under review are listed elsewhere in this report. Much of the OVA's work has been carried by sub committees which report to the EC but the Constitution makes it clear that the Executive Committee is responsible for all the decisions made on behalf of the Association.

Trustees Report of Activities

Chairman' Introduction

It is now nearly a year since I became acting chairman of the OVA.

I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to all those who have contributed to a very rewarding year. I would like to especially thank the Executive Committee members who have helped me in so many ways. We also have approximately 70 members who help the OVA in some role, be it big or small; the walks leaders, newsletter editor, the newsletter co-ordinators and distributors, talks organiser, technical equipment organiser, events organisers, web-site monitor, wild life monitors, village representatives, project managers for interpretation panels, monthly posters producer and distributors in the villages, etc. etc. We find however that, like a lot of organisations a few people are having to double up their jobs. We need more enthusiastic volunteers so I ask members again, to come forward and help, in a small, large, job-sharing capacity or any other way that they can contribute to maintain our success.

Natural Environment

The Natural Environment Committee's role is the protection of the important habitats and natural beauty of the area in which we are fortunate enough to live. Patrick Hamilton and his team are actively pursuing the goal of eradicating the River Otter of Himalayan Balsam. This is a very difficult task which can only be achieved by the cooperation of many agencies and organisations and we hope we are progressing this year in getting everyone to talk to each other. The water-vole project is still ongoing. The annual litter pick on the Otter Estuary was very successful attracting many volunteers and the EDDC Public Amenity, Beach and Foreshore Member Champion, Tom Wright, judged the most bizarre objects found.

Events

The Events Committee committee have put together a very varied programme which has been well supported. John Jones has continued to organise the local walks programme and has attracted some new walks leaders. Some members have walked the length of the Otter from Otter Head to Otter Mouth, led by Bettina Wilson and now have a certificate stating their accomplishment.

Other members have ventured even farther afield with Tony Burges to walk and discover Dartmoor's history and again with Tony, on a stunning day walked from Looe to Polperro. Mo Bowman organised both visits. Caroline Allen and Rosemary Jerrard organised a fossil hunt at Lyme Regis and also the walk around the Axe wetlands, a lunch at Colyton Station and the train back to Seaton. We have had a Map and Compass Day on Dartmoor, organised by Lizzie Everett-Wright, where the skills learnt in the morning had to be applied in the afternoon mist on the moor. The Christmas party moved to the East Devon Golf Club. Numbers were slightly diminished but everyone had a wonderful evening.

Sue Chapman has provided a stimulating programme of talks varying in subject from Bees to Devon Inns. She tried a new format with a Saturday morning series of 3 Talks on the River Otter. It was so successful that the Peter Hall was filled to capacity and people were turned away. We thank Sue for all her hard work and wish her well sailing the oceans. We welcome Graham Knapton who has come forward to be our Talks Organiser. If you have any ideas for talks please contact him.

The OVA is a charity firmly rooted in the community. For many years it has participated in the events of Budleigh Salterton Gala Week, organised by the BS Lions. Since the inception of the Music Festival it has led a BS town walk and this year was asked by the Literary Festival committee to lead a walk focusing on notable writers, artists, scientists, etc who live or had lived in the town. This was done in collaboration with Fairlynch Museum. The showing of the film, The Great White Silence was a joint venture with the Film Society who supplied all the technical expertise, film equipment and loan of wine glasses and Fairlynch Museum who did all the publicity.

History Group

OVApedia continues to expand with David Daniel's commitment and enthusiasm. Articles are still being picked up across the world. A group of 30 members had coffee at Tuckers' Hall, Exeter, and listened to a fascinating talk on the mediaeval wool trade.

Contacts via the website are increasing both for OVApedia and general OVA matters. Our Webmaster, Alan Huddart, emails updates about the programme and other matters to those who have supplied their contact details. We are pleased that people wishing to volunteer are using the website to contact us.

Planning Consultation

The activity that has, however, consumed so much time and debate in the Executive Committee is the unprecedented number of planning applications that have warranted our attention. These are the ones deemed to be significant. Some in a way that just impacts on a few people e.g. the proposal to build a house in a floodplain which would be built higher than its neighbours and overlook them. Others impact on a large number of people e.g. the BS Greenway Lane Allotments; the large pig farm in Venn Ottery, the expansion of the dairy unit in Colaton Raleigh with a new road in the valley; an estate on the edge of Otterton; I could go on and on. It has been a difficult task to make a decision on many of these. We are aware of the OVA's constitution to promote high standards of planning and architecture and for the conservation, protection and restoration for the public benefit of the natural resources, natural beauty, animal and plant life, and lands and buildings in the Association's area of benefit. We are also aware that the whole of our area lies within the East Devon AONB, including all the villages and Budleigh Salterton. Theoretically this should provide us with the same legal protection for the landscape as National Parks. Any planning decision must respect the distinctive qualities of the area; must contribute to its visual appeal and amenity quality and enhance or conserve the character of the area. In these circumstances development should only take place if there are no other alternative sites available elsewhere and that it is in the National interest.

On the other hand the Executive Committee knows that we all have to have a thriving economic community. Tourism plays an important role in this (although with nearly 50% of all jobs dependent on it we would seem to be over exposed to this poorly paid sector). Tourism is driven by the outstanding environment, in particular the internationally important coastline and the quality of the AONB. We are generally supportive of traditional farming enterprise and know the importance that this plays in the maintenance of the landscape and work in the Lower Otter Valley. However, we are concerned at the effects that industrialisation of farming has by subjecting our narrow Devon country lanes to an increasing frequency of very large farm vehicles and on the impact on the surrounding villages.

We are also aware that there is a need for affordable homes in the area but are concerned that insufficient studies have been done of the needs of the local people and we are not just building for people who would like to live in our area but have no connection with it.

So you can see how difficult our decisions are. The OVA is occasionally criticised for being “against” all planning applications. In fact the vast majority of applications attract no adverse comment from us and already this year we have actively supported two particularly well thought out planning applications, one of which was in the Grade I listed Bicton landscape. There can be no doubt that if more applications were of the quality of these two, we would be able to support more. I am sure there are some members who would be interested in helping us solve these dilemmas by joining a Planning Advisory Committee and reporting their thoughts to the EC.

You can see the work we do is important. We desperately need new blood on our committees. The Otter Valley Association is an organisation which has an important role to play in this beautiful part of the world.

Policy on Reserves

The OVA aims to build up sufficient reserves:

1. to meet occasional shortfalls arising from its regular activity
2. to be responsive to local needs and opportunities as they arise
3. to fund worthwhile projects up to £10,000 from time to time.

Risk management

The major risks to which the Association is exposed are reviewed on a regular basis. Policies and controls have been established to mitigate those risks. These include appropriate property and public liability insurance. In addition, all payments over £100 are countersigned by two Trustees, one of whom is normally the Hon. Treasurer.

Treasurer's Report

The Otter Valley Association has had a strong financial year, ending with a surplus of £1385. Talks, visits, the Christmas dinner and book sales all contributed to the surplus. As can be seen from the Statement of Financial Activities, incoming resources and expenditures were both significantly lower compared to last year. The main reason for this decrease in cash flow activity was due to publication activity in 2010/11 that attracted grant money and also significant expense. This year a grant from EDCC AONB was received towards some of the cost of the new edition of the Twelve Walks book. In addition other grants were received this from Devon County Council and EDDC AONB towards the costs of an interpretation panel in the Budleigh beach shelter. However as most of the costs of this project will accrue in the next financial year, the income from these grants was deferred in the accounts to next year as well.

Most of our other transactions were broadly in line with last year, with talks showing a greater surplus this year.

At the end of the year we had 1148 members, an increase of 15 from last year.

I would like to thank Brian Leveridge for examining the accounts again this year and ensuring that everything is in order.

The year- end balance sheet shows a balance of £20,282, which will be available for suitable projects in the Lower Otter Valley.

The OVA's cash balance is held in a Scottish Widows account (that currently does not pay interest) and that account is covered by the Financial Services Authority guarantee.

Roger Saunders
Treasurer

Otter Valley Association ~ Registered Charity No: 278266
Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2012

	2012	2011
	£	£
Incoming Resources		
Subscriptions	3011	2986
Donations received	712	862
Surplus on talks	428	245
Surplus on visits	454	514
Deficit on other events		
Surplus on Christmas Dinner	223	109
Surplus on book sales	199	255
Grants		2359
Gift Aid	689	710
	<u>5716</u>	<u>8040</u>
Resources Expended		
Newsletters	1716	1879
Publications	522	3782
Affiliation fees	153	185
Donation Bud Salt Festival		50
Insurance	250	250
Website maintenance	258	235
Membership cards		101
AGM/New Member party	75	195
Jubilee Field	40	7
Other administration	785	961
Interpretation Panels	532	0
Legal advice		0
	<u>4331</u>	<u>7645</u>
Net Surplus/Deficit for Year	1385	395
General Fund		
Balance at start of year	<u>18897</u>	<u>18502</u>
Balance at end of year	<u>20282</u>	<u>18897</u>

Otter Valley Association ~ Registered Charity No: 278266
Balance Sheet at 31 March 2012

	2012	2011
		£
Current Assets		
Stock of books	1406	848
Debtors & prepayments	857	1288
Cash at bank	22301	17854
	<u>24564</u>	<u>19990</u>
Current Liabilities		
Creditors & accruals	<u>4282</u>	<u>1093</u>
Net Assets	<u>20282</u>	<u>18897</u>
Represented by:		
General Fund (Unrestricted)	<u>20282</u>	<u>18897</u>

Notes:

1. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis under the historical cost convention.
2. The stock of books is recorded at the lower of cost or realisable values.
3. No remuneration has been paid to any Trustee during the year.

Approved by the Committee on 24th April, 2012
and signed on their behalf by:

Roger Saunders
Treasurer