

**Annual General Meeting
Wednesday 13th May 2015
Otterton Village Hall**

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 14 May 2014
3. Matters arising
4. Annual Report including Trustees Report and Accounts
5. Election of Officers
6. Election of Executive Committee Members
7. Appointment of Independent Examiner
8. Any Other Business
9. Date of next AGM ~ Wednesday 11th May 2016 proposed.

The meeting will be followed by refreshments
and an informal picture quiz by Haylor Lass.



**The Otter Valley Association
TRUSTEES' REPORT
for the year ended 31 March 2015**

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 2011.

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 or individuals who 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 for 2014~15

Chairman's Introduction

First, I would like to thank the many volunteers who have helped the OVA. Amongst other activities, over the last 12 months our volunteers have written, edited, sorted, addressed and hand delivered over 2,400 newsletters. They have planned and led on average a walk a week (almost 3,000 miles walked by OVA members), booked and organised 7 talks, pulled many thousand Himalayan balsam plants, launched a Heritage Asset listing program, sold OVA books, launched a new web site and edited and submitted articles for OVAPedia. Without our volunteers the OVA would very quickly cease to function – so thank you all for your time and effort.

But we need more volunteers; the Executive Committee would welcome new members, either as Village representatives (currently we have vacancies for Otterton and Colaton Raleigh) or in other posts (Honorary Secretary, Natural Environment and Events). Please contact me or another member of the Executive if you are interested.

As you will see from the more detailed reports below, the OVA has continued its active program of walks, talks, planning comments and other events. We have also continued to work with other groups to improve the scope of our activities – holding joint talks with the Fairlynch Museum, and working with the Lower Otter restoration project. Both the annual litter pick and the Himalayan Balsam campaign have involved the cooperation of many different organisations. This year we have again paid for transportation to enable children from the local schools to visit the Pebblebed Heaths (in collaboration with the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust) as part of their educational programme.

Events

In the absence of a dedicated Events volunteer, we have not managed as many events as in previous years. However Graham Knapton has organised a program of well supported talks on a wide range of subjects, ranging from the microscopic (Tiny Lives in Rivers and Estuaries), to the visible but hidden, (Old Devonshire Milestones), plus several dealing with wartime Devon. The trustees thank Graham, and also Clive Bowman for his excellent audio-visual technical support. We held a well attended Christmas Party at East Devon Golf Club in December, with the raffle prize, a Fortnum and Mason hamper generously donated by a member.

Planning

Planning applications are reviewed with the constitution of the OVA the deciding factor in reaching a conclusion. The Executive Committee makes the decisions.

This year has been very busy with the lack of a Local Plan in East Devon resulting in a rash of planning applications by developers. East Budleigh, Newton Poppleford and Budleigh Salterton have all seen planning applications for housing developments. Newton Poppleford had several planning applications and one which was rejected by the Planning Inspector immediately bounced back under a different name. The Executive Committee has opposed all these on the grounds that they lie outside the village/town boundary; are in the East Devon AONB; many are on Grade 2 and some on Grade 1 agricultural land and the poor “sustainability” of the application.

The OVA has also made a submission to the Communities and Local Government Committee Inquiry into the operation of the National Planning Policy Framework. A representative then attended Portcullis House in Westminster.

There is now a revised draft of East Devon District Council’s Local Plan for Housing Development in the area from 2013 – 2031. This has been studied and submissions will be made when the plan is available for consultation.

Nicola Daniel

Natural Environment

2014 was the fourth year in which the OVA has been involved with Himalayan Balsam, and the third in which we have been integrated into the Otter Valley Invasives Project sponsored by the Environment Agency. Most of the latter’s work, as in 2013, was concentrated in the upper Otter. The OVA input in 2014 was again concentrated on the Colaton Raleigh Brook, leaving East Budleigh and Newton Poppleford to tackle their own tributaries.

In previous years, severe infestation in the upper Colaton valley had limited progress, so in 2014 the aim was to consolidate in that problem area and extend downstream through the village to the flood plain. This was successfully achieved with three sweeps being completed throughout the whole length of the tributary. *See the Annual Project Report at ova.org.uk*

A major factor in this success was the boosting of our volunteer pool from 16 to 27. In part, this was the result of the publicity ensuing from our investment in a gazebo and new posters that were located, with staff, on the Otter riverbank on two Saturdays in late June. Volunteers pulled HB nearby. Another innovation in 2014 was the investment in a brushcutter that was used to good effect on the flood plain downstream from the Colaton brook. An aim in 2015 is to link this zone to the Colaton brook.

There was close liaison throughout 2014 with Dr Sam Bridgewater (Clinton Devon Estates), a large contingent of CDE and OVA volunteers joining forces to kick start the season on 13th June; and Sam organizing, as last year, an excellent barbecue/seminar for all volunteers in the Otter Inn at Colaton Raleigh on 23rd October. Sam continues to provide invaluable digital cartographic services to record progress throughout the Lower Otter. The Water Vole Project sadly ran aground in 2014 as East Devon District Council no longer had staff time to supervise the project.

OVA continued to support Sam’s field ecology seminars for primary school pupils on Bicton Common in early June. They were, as always, well organized and greatly enjoyed by the children. Topics included the invasion of heath by birch; flora and fauna (including nightjars, Dartford warblers, adders, ants and butterflies); tree height measure; and aquifers.

The annual litter-pick in the Otter estuary on 29th March 2014 was very well supported and the weather wonderfully kind. Beavers on the Otter hit UK headlines during the year and the OVA has supported the Devon Wildlife Trust in its plans for a 5-year monitoring project.

Patrick Hamilton

Walks

The Programme of Walks has continued to expand to meet the needs of an increasing number of OVA walkers, several of whom are new members, with at least one and sometimes two walks per week, throughout the year. During the period June 2013 to July 2014 the average number of people on each walk was 9. Since December 2014, there has been an average of 15 people on each walk, over distances from 3 to 10 miles, on several different days of the week.

Although, the focus remains on the Otter Valley, members have been eager to accept the challenge of longer or more difficult terrain in such places as Dartmoor, Exmoor and the Coastal Path.

In March the Association organised its first residential walking holiday, when 15 members enjoyed three days walking based at Mevagissey, in Cornwall. We are able to provide this service due to our 22 Walk Leaders who lend us their enthusiasm, expertise and experience, and we invite others who would like to share their passion for the great outdoors with our members, to lead with us.

Everyone is welcome on OVA walks. You can view our Aim and Objectives on the OVA website, together with the Programme of Walks and Reports of walks, which also appear in the Association's quarterly Newsletter, where you can find contact details for the Walk Organisers.

Mike Paddison & Chris Buckland

Local Heritage Assets Listing Project

In 2014 we embarked on a local heritage asset listing project, in partnership with East Devon District Council, Devon County Council's Historic Environment Team, and the Fairlynch Museum. Details of the project were presented to all five Town and Parish Councils, and most were supportive. Following English Heritage good practice guidance, public nominations were sought during Autumn 2014. The nominations were then photographed and put on a map on the OVA website. Two exhibitions were held in February in Budleigh Salterton and East Budleigh.

The exhibitions involved considerable work researching, photographing and mapping the nominations, as well as contacting the landowners. In Budleigh Salterton the nominations included good examples of Victorian and Edwardian houses, 1920s-30s public buildings and private residences by notable architects, such as Hatchard-Smith, and many interesting items of street furniture. In the Otter Valley the nominations included a whole variety of architectural and natural features, including the 'Mark Rolle' farm buildings and cottages.

The next stage of the project is to assess all the nominations against the agreed English Heritage selection criteria, and carry out some more research, before handing over the list and details of the local heritage assets to the Conservation Officer at East Devon District Council for further consideration. Hopefully this will be done by the Summer. East Devon District Council will then have to determine and ratify the local list.

All the nominations can be viewed on the OVA website under the 'Built Heritage' section. We are grateful for a grant of £744 from the AONB to cover some of the costs of this project. Dee Woods

History

Our history archive, OVApedia, continues to expand steadily but the main effort this year has been to double check each entry on the new web site.

Web Site

We successfully launched our new-look web site this year, with a lot of behind the scenes work from Alan Huddart and David Daniel. Thank-you to Alan for nearly ten years as our web master and playing a key role in its development and to Martin Smith for taking over as web-master. I hope you have managed to visit the website. We are very pleased with both its appearance and functionality. Many of the beautiful images of the Otter Valley are by OVA member Mo Bowman.

If you visit you will discover that we now have a brand new, cutting edge, web site. It has three adaptive templates, which brings us into the modern era of wide screens, tablets and smart phones. It has a very different look with scrolling images on the home page showcasing the wonderful scenery and OVA activities within our valley.

Within days of doing so, the details of our Local Heritage Asset project had been picked up by Civic Voice and the Devon branch of the CPRE. Clear evidence that this web site is already raising the profile of the OVA. The new site has great potential and we would welcome more volunteers so that we can fully exploit this.

Although much of the web site is new we did transfer all the old articles into it. Some of these go back to our very first web site and we are gradually refreshing each section. If you find something that looks a bit out of date, please let us know. www.ova.org.uk

David Daniel

Membership

After many years of subscriptions at £3/individual or £5/family we bravely decided that this was the year to increase them to £5 and £9 – still a pretty good deal. We also decided to change our bank account. This was a big undertaking for the OVA (and especially our Membership Secretary Clive and Treasurer Trevor Waddington), with over 650 standing orders to be changed. Between the efforts of Clive on data entry and monitoring, and a handful of volunteers who delivered the renewal and reminder letters, we were almost complete by the end of our year.

The new Membership database proved its worth, by stream-lining letter production. With both Lloyds and Nat West supplying statements recording standing order payments, we are working through linking payments to members, after which we can review those not transferred to Lloyds or paying the wrong fee. However, there are still a number of members who have not updated their details. If you are one of them please act soon –we don't want to lose you as a member!

It has also been a good year for new members, with many coming from the walks, talks and workshop events. The new website has also been a good source of members, the new application form can be printed making joining very easy. A new Welcome leaflet has also been designed, and will hopefully be available soon. If you would like copies for friends or neighbours, please email me at membership@ova.org.uk, and I will make sure to send you one.

Clive Bowman, Membership Secretary

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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

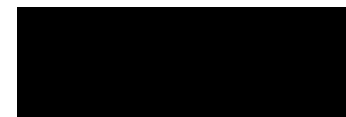
The Association had a satisfactory financial year, ending with a drawdown of £1,148. The need to increase membership fees, approved at the 2014 AGM, coincided with a decision to move the OVA accounts from NatWest to Lloyds. This required members to complete new Bank Standing Order forms which, as expected, has involved the Treasurer and Membership Secretary in much additional work. The benefit, however, is that the Treasurer now has online banking facilities and also face-to-face transactions at Budleigh Salterton's only bank branch.

Significant expenditure during the year included the Himalayan Balsam eradication project (purchase of brush-cutter and associated H&S courses to ensure safe handling). FWAG South West made a donation of f272 towards the project. Expenditure on First Aid courses and First Aid kits for walk leaders was also made. The Local Heritage Assets project, due to complete in September 2015, required expenditure on publicity material and the hire of halls for exhibitions. East Devon AONB Sustainable Development Fund made a grant of f.697 towards the project.

The OVA made a donation to East Budleigh All Saints Church bells appeal and once again funded transport for local schoolchildren to visit the Pebblebed Heaths in a joint education project with the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust.

End of year assets stand at £19,301 which includes a reserve fund of £12,136 held in an interest-bearing account.

My special thanks are due to Brian Leveridge for his assistance as Independent Examiner of the accounts.



Trevor Waddington, Hon Treasurer

**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 2015.

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 Act); 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.

29th April 2015

**Otter Valley Association ~ Registered Charity No: 278266
Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2015**

	2015	2014
	£	£
Incoming Resources		
Subscriptions	2607	2717
Donations received	1856	799
Surplus on talks	65	300
Surplus on events	37	68
Surplus on book sales	392	161
Gift Aid	589	600
Interest	126	0
	5672	4645
Resources Expended		
Newsletters	2072	2040
Affiliation fees	85	153
Insurance	252	252
Website maintenance	312	2712
AGM and Minor Events	65	312
Donations	250	400
School Transport to Pebblebeds	565	413
Himalayan Balsam Project	1250	0
Local Heritage Assets Project	744	0
Walks: 1 st Aid Courses and Kits	440	0
Administration	785	574
Audio/Visual Purchases	0	348
	6820	7204
Net Surplus/Deficit for Year	-1148	-2559
General Fund		
Balance at start of year	20449	23008
Balance at end of year	19301	20449

Balance Sheet at 31 March 2015

	2015	2014
	£	£
Current Assets		
Stock of books	1068	1142
Debtors & prepayments	851	1287
Cash at bank	<u>17722</u>	<u>19426</u>
	<u>19641</u>	<u>21855</u>
 Current Liabilities		
Creditors & accruals	<u>340</u>	<u>1406</u>
 Net Assets	<u>19301</u>	<u>20449</u>
 Represented by:		
 General Fund (Unrestricted)	<u>19301</u>	<u>20449</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 28th April, 2015
and signed on their behalf by:



Trevor Waddington
Hon Treasurer

Reference and administrative information

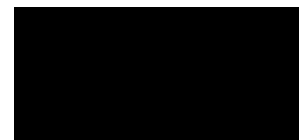
Name of Charity: Otter Valley Association
 Correspondence address: PO Box 70, Budleigh Salterton, EX9 6WN
 Registered Charity No: 278266
 Independent Examiner: Brian Leveridge, 44 Honey Park Road,
 Budleigh Salterton EX9 6EG
 Bankers: National Westminster Bank Plc, Budleigh Salterton
 Lloyds Bank, online
 Scottish Widows Bank Plc, Edinburgh

Trustees

The following people served as Trustees during the year:

Roger Saunders	Chairman
Haylor Lass	Vice Chairman and Newton Poppleford
Iain Ure	Hon. Secretary
Trevor Waddington	Hon. Treasurer
Clive Bowman	Membership
Patrick Hamilton	Natural Environment
Nicola Daniel	Planning
David Daniel	History
Robert Wiltshire	Assistant Minutes Secretary
<i>vacancy</i>	Events
<i>vacancy</i>	Publicity
George Maddaford	Budleigh Salterton
Christine Hadley	East Budleigh
Joan Cullen	Otterton
<i>vacancy</i>	Colaton Raleigh

This Trustees report was approved at the meeting of 28th April 2015
for publication at the Annual General Meeting and on the website.



OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the 35th Annual General Meeting

held at 7.30pm on 14th May 2014 in the East Budleigh Village Hall

1 Present: Nicola Daniel Acting Chairman, Haylor Lass Vice Chairman, David Daniel Acting Hon Secretary, Trevor Waddington Hon Treasurer and a further 7 members of the Executive Committee and 47 other members of the Association.

2 Apologies: Anne Underwood, Alan & Alice Huddart, Nick & Gill Speare, Michael & Anthea Downes, Pat Daly, Margaret & Stuart Yerrell, Brian & Rowan Turnbull, Mo Bowman and Margaret Sellin..

3 The Minutes of the AGM held on 15th May 2013 were taken as read and agreed as a true record, proposed by Robert Wiltshire, seconded by Clive Bowman and passed by a show of hands.

4 Matters Arising: There were no matters arising

5 Annual Report: The Chairman pointed out that copies of the Otter Valley Association Trustees' Report for the year ended 31st March 2014 had been published in the newsletter and printed copies were in the possession of attendees.

Coming to the end of her three year term the Chairman thanked all who had made her chairmanship so easy and enjoyable, Haylor Lass, Vice Chairman, David Daniel Hon Secretary, and Roger Saunders and Trevor Waddington, Hon Treasurers. She also thanked all members of the committee who had given her so much support.

The OVA had once again joined with other groups, charities, parish councils and Clinton Devon Estates to make this such a fruitful year. The highlights must be the involvement with the local schools on the commons with the Pebblebed Conservation Trust. The active involvement of different groups to tackle the scourge of Himalayan Balsam; the Annual Litter Pick; the extensive programme of walks walking on old and new routes. The Talks have covered a variety of subjects and been so well attended.

The Chairman stressed, as she has done on previous occasions, the need for more volunteers. We need a Publicity officer; and village representatives for both Colaton Raleigh and Otterton.

She also announced that she was stepping down as Chairman of the events committee. The committee members work as a tremendous team, they just need someone to act as a co-ordinator. She has been asked by the Executive Committee to remain on the committee and take the lead on planning matters so she also made a request for volunteers to discuss how the OVA can respond on this subject.

Looking ahead, the OVA is wishing to start a Local Heritage Asset List. Approx. half of councils have them in place and it does give some protection to the buildings, green spaces etc. which the community love. We will need volunteers to help with this project so anyone interested in buildings and history were also asked to contact her.

More volunteers are needed to tackle the Himalayan Balsam and they were asked to contact Patrick Hamilton.

Finally, she said that there is an exciting year in prospect- Local Voices will have an evening on June 13th in BS Playhouse where local writers will read some exciting work inspired by environmental issues and we hope to have a Christmas Dinner at East Devon Golf Club on Dec. 13th.

6 Treasurer's Report

Trevor Waddington then presented the Treasurer's Report, mentioning the various sources of income to the OVA and the success of the many events in contributing to the income. He explained that the main reason for the £2559 draw down on funds was due to the cost of the new web site. He also mentioned to some of the other disbursements that had been made during the year to local causes and to provide transport for local school children to attend an education day on the Pebblebed Heaths. He then drew attention to the sharp increase in postal costs of posting newsletters to members, such as those living in Exmouth, for whom it is difficult to find distributors.

The Treasurer thanked Brian Leveridge for his assistance as independent examiner.

Brian Major raised three questions from the floor. He first asked whether any OVA funds had been used in the past year to cover legal action over the Longboat planning application to which the Treasurer answered no. He then asked whether any funds had ever been spent on legal fees regarding the Longboat. Given that the Treasurer's experience (and that of the Chairman) on the Executive Committee does not stretch back that far this question was answered by the Hon Secretary and Vice Chairman. They recalled that £1000 had been spent on obtaining legal advice five or six years ago but that as a result no further monies had been spent on the case. Lastly, Brian Major asked whether OVA members had been consulted on this, to which the Vice Chairman replied that it is the job of the Executive Committee to take responsibility to make such decisions. (See further explanatory note below).

Acceptance of the Trustees' Report and the Accounts was proposed by Jed Falby, seconded by Roger Saunders and agreed by a show of hands.

7 Election of Officers: The Chairman asked the Hon Secretary to report on nominations. He replied that there had been only been one nomination by the required closing date, 14 days prior to the AGM, for each officer post so there would be no contest. The Hon Secretary read out the Nominations of Officers as follows:

Chairman: Roger Saunders Vice Chairman: Haylor Lass
Hon Treasurer: Trevor Waddington Hon Secretary: Iain Ure

The election of these Officers was proposed by Chris Pound seconded by Mike Paddison and agreed by a show of hands.

8 Election of Executive Committee Members The Hon Sec said that the following were nominated to fill the remaining posts on the Executive and, being not more than the number provided in the Constitution, were also declared elected:- Clive Bowman, David Daniel, Nicola Daniel, Christine Hadley, Patrick Hamilton, George Maddaford, and Bob Wiltshire. Acceptance of the appointment of these officers and members was proposed by Chris Buckland seconded by Mike Paddison and agreed by a show of hands. Members were told that vacancies particularly for Publicity and for village representatives for Otterton and Colaton Raleigh existed. The Executive Committee may co-opt members to fill these posts and individuals are always welcome to sit in for a trial period.

9 Independent Examiner: Thanks were expressed to Brian Leveridge for acting again as Independent Examiner of the accounts. Having agreed to be reappointed for a further year, Mr Leveridge was proposed by Roger Saunders seconded by Clive Bowman and agreed by a show of hands.

10 Consideration of Membership Fees. The Chairman told members that the Executive had decided to seek their views at this AGM for raising subscription rates. This follows concern within the executive that subscription rates at present levels no longer covers postage of newsletter, and many now have to be posted. There is also concern that the Committee has yet to find a replacement Events Chairman and in recent years events have provided an additional steady stream of funds. The proposal was that from 2015, individual subscriptions should rise from £3 to £5 and family subscriptions from £5 to £9. After discussion this proposal was proposed by Tony Venning seconded by Meryl Williams and carried by a show of hands. Membership Secretary, Clive Bowman then explained that, whilst making this change, the OVA also intended to move those paying by standing order to direct debiting, and that no financial details will be included when the forms are sent out.

11 Any Other Business: None

12 Date of next meeting: Wednesday 13th May 2015 at the Village Hall, Otterton. There being no other business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.50pm. Following the refreshments, members enjoyed a talk on the River Otter Restoration Project given by Mike Williams from the Environment Agency.

Explanatory Note.

Following the AGM the OVA records were consulted for the precise details. The accounts show a single payment for £1,403 made in Dec 2009 for legal advice. This was specifically referred to in the Trustees report for 2009-10 where the Chairman wrote"we sought clarification of the legally unsustainable minutes of the [EDDC Planning] meeting which deferred the decision but allegedly approved scale and mass. Legal advice was sought after efforts to clarify the situation by other means proved unsuccessful."