

**The Otter Valley Association
TRUSTEES' REPORT
for the year ended 31 March 2017**

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 out 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 2016~17

Chairman's Introduction

A review of our activities over the last 12 months. Firstly, I would like to thank our volunteers - without you there would not be an Otter Valley Association. What do our volunteers do? Organise walks and talks, write, edit and distribute the newsletter, manage the membership, pay the bills, maintain our website and Facebook pages, manage our Planning, Natural Environment and History functions, help clear Himalayan Balsam, litter pick in the Estuary and much more. This year I would especially like to recognise the efforts of Chris Buckland and Mike Paddison, who have been our walks organisers for four years and run an amazing programme, they are stepping down and handing over to a new team. Thank you all volunteers for the time and effort you put in to help the OVA.

The Executive Committee is fortunate in retaining many of its members for another year, with Penny Kurowski (Hon. Sec), Jon Roseway (Treasurer), Haylor Lass (Vice Chair), Nicola Daniel (Planning), David Daniel (History), George Maddaford (Budleigh Rep) agreeing to stay on, together with Jacqui Baldwin (Newsletter) and Geoff Lake (Talks). We have vacancies for an Events Organiser, Natural Environment Committee and village reps for Otterton and Colaton Raleigh. Finally, I will be standing down as Chair, having completed my 3-year tenure.

The nature of the planning process means that while we write letters about various planning applications we can rarely claim credit for decisions that are reached based on many factors. However, we welcome the decision to close Blackhill Quarry, with an eventual reduction in the number of HGV trips across Woodbury Common when all operations cease. We can also celebrate planning decisions that have recognised and strengthened our Conservation Areas (although more needs to be done), and also the decision to refuse a development proposal beyond the built-up area boundary of Budleigh Salterton near Barn Lane. The OVA has also been closely involved with the development of the Budleigh Salterton Neighbourhood Plan. This important document has been to East Devon District Council and is now with the Independent Examiner for review. Even prior to approval this document is beginning to be quoted in reference to planning applications. In the year ahead I expect we shall see more progress on the Lower Otter Restoration Project (the OVA is a member of

the stakeholder committee). A list of potential alternative strategies is being reduced as in-depth modelling and analysis continues.

The Natural Environment Committee have continued to grapple successfully with the invasive Himalayan Balsam. After 6 years working along the Colaton Raleigh tributaries to the River Otter they are seeing a real impact, with much less balsam showing up in most areas. 11 volunteers put in 255 hours pulling up Balsam this year. The annual litter pick in the Otter Estuary continues to be well supported, and we have maintained our 100% record of no volunteers lost to the mud or the incoming tide (although some boots were at risk last year). The Natural Environment Committee is very keen to recruit new volunteers and committee members - if you are interested please get in touch.

The walks programme has been expertly managed by Chris Buckland and Mike Paddison. They organised an amazing 85 walks last year, with 859 walkers (up from 500 in 2013/4) covering 634 miles in our area and beyond. Please welcome our new walks team that is now in place, I wish them every success as they take over from Chris and Mike.

Geoff, our new talks organiser has provided a varied programme of talks this winter, covering history, farming and fungi.

There have not been many events this year, mostly due to the lack of an Events Organiser. We did have a guided bird identification walk. We are hoping to manage a few more events next year, with the possibility of a Members Summer Party and an autumn fungi-foray type walk. Watch future newsletters for developments. If you have an idea for an event, please get in touch, we may be able to help.

Our website functions well as an information resource and an advertisement for the OVA, supplemented by a Facebook page. It also hosts the OVA local history resource - OVApedia, which continues to expand.

In conclusion, the OVA strives to provide a varied programme of activities for its members, as well as improving the natural environment and protecting the built environment. In all of this we are dependent on our volunteers to succeed, and we look forward to another year of activities in the beautiful place that we live.

Roger Saunders

Membership

Following the change of bank and the increase in annual subscription fees, membership numbers dropped as had been expected. However, we have had a steady stream of new members joining, via walks and talks, word of mouth, and the website, and membership numbers are slowly creeping back up, currently 775 members as we end this year.

Several members cancelled their membership during the year, because they are moving away from the area. It is sad that members feel that, if they leave the valley, then they must leave the OVA as well. The quarterly newsletter is a great way to keep in touch with what is happening in the area, and supporting the various activities of the OVA.

Can I remind those who don't pay by bank standing order, that the 2017 subscription was due on the 1st April, please send your subscription to: Membership, OVA, PO Box 70, Budleigh Salterton, EX9 6WN.

Clive Bowman

The Himalayan Balsam Project in 2016

In 2012 we commenced our campaign in the badly infested Stowford Woods on the Colaton Raleigh brook with the aim of reducing the level of infestation to one in which a small group could keep the scattered plants under control with annual outings. This has almost been achieved. In the early years there had been so much Himalayan Balsam (HB) in the upper reaches that we had been unable to execute a complete longitudinal transect down to the flood plain. We almost made it in 2013 but in 2014 we did it twice and nearly succeeded in executing a third. Since then, in 2015 and 2016 the three sweeps have been comfortably achieved with the number of plants encountered steadily decreasing and the completely clear areas steadily increasing.

Having said this, surprise new hotspots have continued to cause frustration. Three cropped up in late 2015 and one of these continues to be problematic. Worse, a completely new one emerged this year and looks set to trouble us for several years. These hotspots are away from the original target zone which is the stream banks and the immediately adjacent fields. One is on a footpath along the valley side well above the brook (opposite Colaton Raleigh Church), the second is in a farmyard and adjacent field again well above a tributary of the brook at Kingston. *cont. next page*

Volunteers

It goes without saying that all of the progress referred to above has depended on volunteers. Here the picture for 2016 is mixed. Quantity has been poor; quality excellent. The number participating dropped to a record low: just 11. The good news is the excellent turn-out by this smaller group. Expressed in hours per volunteer it was the highest ever: 23.2, so that the total of hours input emerged as 255 which was above the 2013 input of 245 achieved with a larger volunteer force. What might have been achieved if we could have hit a total input of 375 hours is, of course, a major issue. So why did numbers drop to such a low level?

In each of my previous annual reports I have commented on the high turnover of volunteers. This year "anno domini" seems to have played a big role, at least 6 dropping out from last year's 19 because of aches and pains. Some may well return but clearly it is essential to boost the number of new volunteers. There were two this year and they did mightily well. We have two more for 2017 already but clearly another dozen would make a huge impact.

What is disappointing in this context is the poor response to efforts to boost the number of volunteers. Most of the trickle who reach us come from responses to the website or word of mouth. In 2013 the OVA made a big effort with the gazebo and display materials on the Otter Riverside Path but it produced no more than a couple. This year, in 2016 Kate Ponting of Clinton Devon Estates/Pebblebed Heaths organized a display tent on Wednesday 17th August at Otterton Mill. The aim was to explain the Himalayan Balsam project and recruit volunteers. OVA volunteers helped staff the tent, discussing the project with interested visitors. Sadly, again, the results were disappointing. The problem remains.

On Thursday 19th January this year a review meeting of the 2016 season was held in the Clinton Devon Estates offices attended by representatives of several groups who are working on the HB problem. Publicity and the Volunteer problem were discussed and a coordinated approach will be planned in the coming weeks.

Patrick Hamilton,

Acting Chairman, Natural Environment Committee

Walking with the OVA 2016 - 2017 review

When we assumed the role of Walks Organisers in May 2013, one of our aims was for our 18 Walk Leaders to provide a walk for our members each week of the year; last year there were 85 walks led by 28 Walk Leaders! Such has been the enthusiasm of our 'leaders' and their 'followers' we have been able to develop a programme encompassing a choice of length of walk, timing, location, terrain, well-loved local paths in the Otter Valley and more challenging designated named trails further afield. Our special thanks go to our colleagues who are willing to share their enthusiasm and expertise, by leading walks for us.

On mid summer's day 2016 members accepted the challenge to complete the East Devon Way's 40 miles in 18 hours, and the last stage of Devon's 117 mile Coast to Coast trail was completed in October. We have combined with other organisations, like the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust, which attracted over 30 people to Woodbury during Heath Week, and recruited some new members, and most recently a small group of Railway Ramblers were part of a group of 46 who commemorated the closing of the Budleigh Branch line in March 1967. Of course, these are the walks that catch the headlines, but the core of our work has remained trying to meet the needs of all members, who simply enjoy exercise and good company in the Great Outdoors. Attendances on those walks (which average 12) have never mattered. As we compose this review, we are about to embark on our annual walking weekend in the West Country. You can read a list of the aim and objectives that have motivated our planning, a statistical analysis of walk records, together with the current programme, and breaking news, as well as reflections and photographs by our members of some of the walks that have taken place, on the OVA website, under ((OVA Diary".

The 2017 AGM will mark the end of our four years in office for which we would like to thank all those who have walked with us and so readily lent us their support and friendship. We believe we leave OVA Walking in good shape, and at the perfect time to introduce a new vibrancy to the organisation, in the manner of Team OVA Walking. Heather Fereday, Jon Roseway, Paul Kurowski, Penny Kurowski, Peter Paine and Stella French will share the role of Walks Organisers to promote and enhance the future of OVA Walking. We thank them and trust they will enjoy their responsibilities as much as we have.

Mike Paddison & Chris Buckland

Treasurer's Report

The Association has had a relatively normal financial year compared to the two preceding years when we raised the annual subscription and then we moved to Lloyds Bank. The change of bank resulted in around 25% of subscriptions not being renewed and a consequent fall in the net surplus. A small subsidy for each person attending the new members and volunteers party led to a deficit on events for the year. A surplus on talks and book sales together with bank interest contributed to earnings. The newsletter is, as always, by far the largest expenditure, with insurance and website maintenance the next largest individual items. Based on the level of sales during recent years, the value of the publications stock has been written down by £500.

Assets at the close of the financial year stand at £22,620 which includes a reserve fund of £12,364 held in an interest-bearing account.

I would like to thank Brian Leveridge for his assistance in preparing these accounts and ensuring that everything is in order.



Jon Roseway, Hon Treasurer

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.

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2017

Balance Sheet at 31 March 2017

	2017 £	2016 £
Incoming Resources		
Subscriptions	3592	4773
Donations and Grants	35	895
Surplus on talks	89	76
Surplus on events	-242	94
Surplus on book sales	191	261
Gift Aid	680	900
Interest	107	121
	<u>4452</u>	<u>7120</u>
Resources Expended		
Newsletters	2257	2516
Affiliation fees	100	123
Insurance	285	252
Website maintenance	390	18
AGM and Minor Events	34	86
Donations	0	200
Hatchard-Smith Blue Plaque	0	154
Administration	488	850
Book stock reserve	500	0
	<u>4054</u>	<u>4199</u>
Net Surplus/Deficit for Year	398	2921
General Fund		
Balance at start of year	<u>22222</u>	<u>19301</u>
Balance at end of year	<u>22620</u>	<u>22222</u>

	2017 £	2016 £
Current Assets		
Stock of books	468	1001
Debtors & prepayments	2180	1900
Cash at bank	20085	19344
	<u>22620</u>	<u>22245</u>
Current Liabilities		
Creditors & accruals	113	23
	<u>113</u>	<u>23</u>
Net Assets	<u>22620</u>	<u>22222</u>
Represented by:		
General Fund (Unrestricted)	<u>22620</u>	<u>22222</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 25th April, 2017
and signed on their behalf by:

J. D. Roseway

Jon Roseway
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 2017.

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 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is required.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts (under section 145 of the 2011 Act);
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 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 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 next statement.

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:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have 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.

BE Leveridge C.A.


44 Honey Park Road
Budleigh Salterton
EX9 6EG

3rd April 2017

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: Lloyds Bank Plc, online account
Scottish Widows Bank Plc, Edinburgh

Trustees

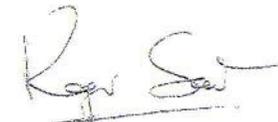
The following people served as Trustees during the year:

Roger Saunders	Chairman
Haylor Lass	Vice Chairman and Newton Poppleford
Penny Kurowski	Secretary
Jon Roseway	Hon. Treasurer
Clive Bowman	Membership Secretary
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
Jon Roseway	East Budleigh
<i>vacancy</i>	Otterton
<i>vacancy</i>	Colaton Raleigh

Other Contacts

Jacqui Baldwin	Newsletter
Geoff Lake	Talks Organiser
Martin Smith	Webmaster
Helen Fereday	Walks planning contact

This Trustees Report was approved at the meeting of 25th April 2017 for publication at the Annual General Meeting and on the website.



Minutes of the 37th Annual General Meeting of the Otter Valley Association held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 18th May 2016 at the Masonic Hall, Budleigh Salterton

- Apologies: Malcolm and Mary Jones. Clive and Mo Bowman. Angela Symes.
- Minutes of the previous AGM held on 13th May 2015, were signed as a true reflection of that meeting.
- Matters arising: None.
- Annual report including the trustees report and accounts.

The Chairman thanked the Executive Committee for their support, with special thanks given to Hon. Treasurer Trevor Waddington and the Talks Secretary Graham Knapton who were standing down from their positions. He welcomed Jon Roseway (Treasurer) and Geoff Lake (Talks) who had volunteered to be nominated for the above positions. He also welcomed Penny Kurowski who was volunteering to be Honorary Secretary.

The Chairman noted that it has been an active year for the OVA, with the bank account transfer to Lloyds completed and the annual subscription fee increased. The whole exercise had resulted in some loss of members, with the current membership in the 700-800 region, and due to the fee increase there was no financial loss. An OVA Facebook page was launched, with page visits low but increasing. The Heritage Asset list team, lead by Dee Woods, nominated 239 buildings and objects to be listed and it now remained for the EDDC to ratify these items. He wished to commend the members who had put so much work into compiling the list. The OVA is actively involved in the Budleigh Salterton Neighbourhood Plan, and is a consultant for the East Budleigh plan. The Lower Otter Restoration Project was still under scrutiny, no firm plans have been drawn up yet, but concerns have been expressed about the need to allow for continued access to White Bridge and the South Farm Road business units without interruption by high tides. The New Members' and Volunteers Party held at Otterton Mill was judged to have been a great success. Jacqui Baldwin was thanked for her choice of venue and organising skills.

Visits had taken place throughout the year; to the Donkey Sanctuary, Harpford Wood (hosted by Clinton Devon Estates) to hear of the challenges of forestry, and a visit to Popham's Farm, Colaton Raleigh (also CDE). All were well attended. The walks program has risen to new heights with 65 having taken place, a record. Thanks due to Chris Buckland and Mike Paddison. The annual litter pick had attracted about 45 brave volunteers on a rather cold and windy day. The Himalayan Balsam eradication crusade continued - led by Patrick Hamilton. The Chairman pointed out that Patrick was only Acting- Chairman of the Environmental Committee and was very anxious to find a successor. The OVA was continuing to fund the transport of local schoolchildren to the Pebble Bed Heathlands, as part of their biology curriculum. The best attended talk was about beavers on the Otter, with an audience of over 100 people, in fact some people had to be turned away due to space limitations. The OVA continued to collaborate with other organisations including the Fairlynch Museum, Clinton Devon Estates, East Devon District Council, Devon County Council, the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, Budleigh Salterton Town Council and other Parish Councils. The Chair had also attended meetings of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership. The Association previously had a person to organise 'away-day' visits. He was looking for somebody to take on this role. The finances are in good shape as can be seen in the accounts. There is a strong Exec. Committee. There is still a vacancy for village reps for Colaton Raleigh and Otterton. The Chair urged members to read the Trustees' Report which gave more detailed information.

- Election of Officers. The Chair asked the Assistant Minutes Secretary to report on Officer nominations received by the required closing date, 14 days prior to the AGM. These were. Chairman- Roger Saunders; Vice-chair – Haylor Lass; Honorary Treasurer- Jon Roseway; Honorary Secretary- Penny Kurowski. As no other nominations had been made the appointments were confirmed.
- Election of Executive Committee Members. The Assistant Minutes Secretary reported that the following members had been nominated to fill the remaining positions on the Executive Committee. Clive Bowman, David Daniel, Nicola Daniel, George Maddaford, Bob Wiltshire, Geoff Lake, Jacqui Baldwin.

Patrick Hamilton to continue until such time as another chairman comes forward for the Environmental Committee, Trevor Waddington.

- All these members had been nominated and seconded. No other nominations had been received, the appointments were confirmed by the members present.
- Appointment of Independent Examiner. The outgoing Hon. Treasurer gave a brief report of the accounts. The report was adopted by proposer – Roger Kingwill and seconded by Peter Vaughan. The Chairman asked the members to agree to the reappointment of Mr Brian Leveridge as the Independent Auditor. This was proposed by Haylor Lass and seconded by David Daniel.
- AOB. None.
- Date of next AGM proposed Wednesday 10th May 2017 at East Budleigh Village Hall. (*subject to the venue being available*)

**Annual General Meeting
Wednesday 10th May 2017
East Budleigh Village Hall**

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 18th May 2016
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 ~

The meeting will be followed by refreshments
and an illustrated talk about wildlife on the River Otter
by David White