

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
Virgin Money plc, Newcastle upon Tyne

Trustees

The following people served as Trustees during the year:

Bob Wiltshire	Chairman
Haylor Lass	Vice Chairman and Newton Poppleford
Penny Kurowski	Hon. Secretary
Jon Roseway	Hon. Treasurer and East Budleigh
Clive Bowman	Membership Secretary
David Hatch	Natural Environment
Nicola Daniel	Planning
David Daniel	History
George Maddaford	Budleigh Salterton
Pat & Geoff Porter	Otterton
<i>vacancy</i>	Colaton Raleigh
<i>vacancy</i>	Events

Other Committee Members:

Jacqui Baldwin	Newsletter Editor
Geoff Lake	Talks Organiser



This Trustees Report was approved by the chairman
on 30th April 2019
for publication at the Annual General Meeting and on the website.

**The Otter Valley Association
TRUSTEES' REPORT
for the year ended 31 March 2019**

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 with Venn Ottery.

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 (EC), 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. The Committee includes 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.

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

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Otter Valley Association for the year ended 31 March 2019.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Otter Valley Association you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act).

I report in respect of my examination of the accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Otter Valley Association as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. The accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. The accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the forms and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signature



Date

16th April 2019

B E Leveridge C.A.

44 Honey Park Road
Budleigh Salterton
EX9 6EG

Balance Sheet at 31 March 2019

	2019 £	2018 £
Current Assets		
Stock of books	274	401
Debtors & prepayments	532	1036
Cash at bank	<u>22,518</u>	<u>21,472</u>
	<u>23,324</u>	<u>22,909</u>
Current Liabilities		
Creditors & accruals	<u>129</u>	<u>72</u>
Net Assets	<u>23,195</u>	<u>22,837</u>
Represented by:		
General Fund (Unrestricted)	<u>23,195</u>	<u>22,837</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 30th April, 2019
and signed on their behalf by:

Jon Roseway, Hon Treasurer

Trustees Report of Activities for 2018~2019

Chairman's Introduction

My first duty, as in previous years is to thank all the many members who give up so much of their time and effort into making the OVA the wonderful organisation that it is. Since taking over as Chairman I have become increasingly aware of the numbers involved. Ranging from the names that appear in bright lights at the back of the newsletter to the ‘unsung heroes’, who belong to sub committees, lead walks, distribute newsletters, display posters, take part in the Himalayan Balsam eradication campaign and more that I am still unaware of. The OVA, may appear to be like a swan serenely floating along whilst under the water others are beavering away. Enough of analogies. It was my intent to print the names of all such volunteers in the newsletter, but am advised that I might be in breach of the dreaded Data Protection Act. So once again through this medium, to all the 72 plus, thank you all.

Tonight we will see a few changes in the Officers and the members of the Executive Committee: Penny Kurowski and Jon Roseway have completed their three years of office after carrying out superlative work as secretary and treasurer. Geoff Lake is standing down, also after three years, after producing for us, some excellent talks. The vacant positions have been nominated and seconded. Other positions remain as before.

The 2018, Xmas party exceeded all expectations of numbers and the Richter Scale of fun. This year we eagerly await a ‘murder mystery’ being tailor made for our delectation. We also look forward to our Ruby Anniversary party and later a farm visit as a follow up to the very successful one in 2015.

In September last year, our walks organisers entered the OVA for the AONB (not too many acronyms, I hope), Acland award. This is for projects that ‘seek to enhance people’s physical and mental health through close connection with the environment of the East Devon AONB.’ We reached the short list and at the prizegiving were delighted to be awarded second place. Congratulations to all concerned.

In this Trustee’s Report, you will find enclosed individual reports from various parts of the organisation.

continued overleaf

Chairman's Introduction, continued

The Environmental Committee continue to do sterling work to arrest the spread and eliminate the dastardly Himalayan Balsam. With some success, there have been reports in some places of disappointed pluckers being unable to find any. However, they have not become complacent as the problem is so widespread. The annual litter pick attracted record numbers of participants and happened to coincide with a national litter pick campaign. The Planning Committee under the leadership of the indefatigable Nicola Daniel has continued to draw our attention to some of the more unfortunate applications and decisions of the EDDC Development Committee and also those of the Government Inspectors. This committee has done much work in contributing submissions to various consultative projects. Our treasurer's report shows an increase of 13% in our income, however expenditure has risen by 11%. Nevertheless we still have a healthy reserve. The walking group, in the year ending 31st March, recorded a remarkable total of 69 walks. This has involved a huge amount of organisation from initial conception to the dry runs to the actual walks. It is perhaps the walks for which the OVA is best known. Our Membership Secretary has been diligently processing every new application and has recorded an increase of 79 members in the last year bringing our total to 844 members. Well done to those who have been able to recruit new members.

Although we had issued an open invitation to pay towards the transport of schoolchildren to the Pebblebed Heathlands, there were no applications last year. We have now put the matter on a more formal basis and have agreed to finance up the £100 for each application, up to a maximum of £1000 per annum. We have also removed the necessity for the visit to be to the heaths so that it can include farm visits. The schools will apply directly to us for this grant, in order for them to be aware of the source of such funding.

Finally I would like to thank the Executive Committee for the enthusiasm and support which they have given to me during the last year. This has resulted in valuable meetings , often running into overtime.

Bob Wiltshire

Otter Valley Association ~ Registered Charity No: 278266

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2019

	2019	2018
	£	£
Incoming Resources		
Subscriptions	3913	3838
Donations and Grants	0	110
Surplus on talks	460	485
Surplus on events	358	-35
Surplus on book sales	406	163
Gift Aid	747	639
Interest	70	62
	5954	5262
Resources Expended		
Newsletters	2394	2178
Affiliation fees	75	100
Insurance	336	286
Website maintenance	390	360
AGM	33	171
Donations	125	635
Administration	697	425
Schools Transport	0	570
First Aid Training	0	320
Promotional Goods	543	0
Otterton Church display boards	829	0
Himalayan Balsam Leaflets	99	0
Other minor payments	75	0
	5596	5045
Net Surplus/Deficit for Year	358	217
General Fund		
Balance at start of year	22837	22620
Balance at end of year	23195	22837

Membership Report

OVA membership increased by 79 new members, raising membership numbers to 844 by the end of the membership year.

The General Data Protection Regulation Act 2018 which came into force in May last year, has required some changes to how the OVA handles data, privacy and the cookies on the website. More details about these are available on the website, or on request from the membership secretary.

The OVA is now tracking how new members hear about joining; walks, talks and publicity stands at local events prove effective at recruiting, interestingly with the website being the main source of application forms. As always though, word of mouth proves to be the best source of new members. If we each encourage one person to join in 2019, the OVA would become one of the biggest Civic Amenity Societies in England, strengthening its sway on both local and national matters.

Clive Bowman, Membership Secretary

Treasurer's Report

Income for the year was 13% higher in comparison to the previous year. Subscriptions, always our main source of income, increased slightly. The other major contributors were Gift Aid, book sales, and profit from our Talks programme and Christmas party. The large surplus from the party was unintentional and resulted from a much larger number of participants than expected.

Expenditure was up by 11% resulting in a small surplus for the year. The newsletter was by far the largest expense and increased by 9%. Significant investments were made in promotional goods such as badges and notepads as part of the recruitment campaign, and in display boards for Otterton church. There were no payments for schoolchildren's transport to the Pebblebed Heaths, but financial support for this project is expected to recommence in 2019. Donations to like-minded organisations were down, whilst admin costs were up.

Assets at the close of the financial year stand at £23,195 which includes a reserve fund of £12,496 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

Natural Environment

The OVA Himalayan Balsam (HB) project commenced in 2011 and has achieved its first target of effectively controlling infestation in the Colaton Raleigh brook. We are now making an important decision as to where we can expand into pastures new. Top of the wish-list is Bicton College grounds which have become heavily infested. Together with Clinton Devon Estates (CDE), we are working with representatives from the College, the Arena, and the Gardens to try to achieve a "Balsam-free Bicton". On 6th December, CDE gave volunteers a "thank-you" lunch at The Otterton Mill in Otterton. On 25th February 2019 there was the customary "feed-back" seminar at CDE HQ involving the various groups tackling HB. This again, provided a good opportunity for discussion of future strategy. We continue to investigate the possibility of employing a specific rust (fungus) to infect and impair the vigour of HB.

Following the excellent increase in volunteers to 25 in 2017, numbers slipped slightly to 19 in 2018. We would greatly welcome any member who would like to do something positive for the environment to join our dedicated group. In August, we erected a gazebo on the river bank at Otterton to inform the public of our activities and to encourage new OVA membership. A new pamphlet describing all about HB has been commissioned and will be available for distribution in spring 2019.

We have attempted to re-introduce Harebells to the Jubilee meadow (on the common, to the west of Budleigh beach) with seeds broadcast in the autumn and further sowings planned for this year.

Newly planted Scots pines (to reinforce the aging three original pines) which stand so prominently on the skyline east of Park Lane are thriving despite last year's dry summer.

The Annual Spring Litter-pick was held on Saturday 23rd March 2019. Turn-out, as always, was excellent, the weather kind and prizes were awarded by the Mayor Cllr. Alan Dent. This year, Geoff Porter has kindly agreed to take over the organisation of this event.

The NEC contributed to the OVA's response to the Landscape review, commissioned by Michael Gove, to update and reinforce the status of National Parks and AONBs, with particular emphasis on the special features of East Devon and Dorset.

Dr David Hatch (Chairman, NEC)

Planning

I was hoping that I could give a positive report on planning for the last year as East Budleigh and Budleigh Salterton both had Neighbourhood Plans adopted and their local housing needs are on target. Also East Devon's house building rates are on target.

However, it seems that the pressure to build over-rides even the designated policies of our AONB and our Conservation Areas. EDDC planning officers, town and parish councils, the Appeals Inspectorate and even District Councillors give great weight to housing need. As a district councillor comments in an environmentally sensitive site

“Along with the Parish Council I believe this is a finely balanced application where the benefit of removing a dilapidated barn to provide sustainable accommodation just outweighs the potential harm to the environment and the wildlife. Therefore it has my support.”

The Budleigh Salterton Town Council was incorrect as no additional accommodation would have been added to Budleigh Salterton’s housing stock but nevertheless commented on a planning application

“On this occasion Members feel the benefit of additional accommodation in a sustainable location outweighs the potential harm to the conservation area.”

The greatest disappointment to many members was the approval of an engineering works by just one vote on the Pebblebed Heaths. Another great disappointment was the interpretation by an Appeals Inspector of BS Neighbourhood Plan which allowed garden infill contrary to the NP policies. I have already written at length about East Budleigh and the development behind the High Street.

The OVA has lost count of the number of planning applications submitted by Ladram Bay to EDDC and not yet decided. What is holding it all up?

However, the OVA will continue to comment on policies which are contrary to our constitution and that, if we make no comment it can be assumed that there will be no major impact on the environment. However, a planning application may cause a major impact to the neighbours so please, please send in your objections to EDDC if this is the case. And please continue to contact us if you are worried and need advice.

Nicola Daniel

Walking with the OVA, 2018-2019 review

In the 12 months ended 31/3/19, 743 walkers have undertaken a total of 69 walks covering a total of 4,739 miles walked by members with an average of 10.8 attendees per walk. It is encouraging to see that there has been a marked increase in attendance since the start of 2019. We frequently hand out membership forms to new walkers and it is nice to see new faces again. All this would not be possible without the group of walk leaders who I badger each quarter to ask them to lead a walk or two in up to 4 months' time, a feat of personal planning itself. Each walk has to be reconnoitered at least once to ensure paths are negotiable and where public transport is involved, timetables need to be checked. The walk team would like to express their thanks to these volunteers who put in several hours behind the scenes to ensure the day's walk goes without a hitch.

In the past year, our long-distance staged walk was the Devonshire Heartland Way which started in Okehampton and headed East. We have walked various routes on our local commons which seem to be particularly popular. We have visited various areas of Dartmoor, popped over to East Dorset to sample some offerings there, explored parts of our local coastal paths, headed along the Tiverton canal, visited the towns of both Ashburton and Colyton and walked some local favourites in our beloved Otter Valley.

The programme for the next quarter is in the new magazine and on the OVA website. Let's hope the weather is kind to us for we have some interesting walks planned, including some new offerings.

Heather Fereday and the walk team,
Stella French, Penny & Paul Kurowski and Jon Roseway

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.

The 40th Annual General Meeting of the Otter Valley Association

Thursday 9th May 2019
at Newton Poppleford Playing Fields Pavilion

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 8 May 2018
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 ~ proposed *Wednesday 13th May 2020*
at the Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton.

The formal business will be followed by refreshments and an illustrated presentation by David White of 'Countryfile Calendar' fame.

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