



The Otter Valley Association
TRUSTEES' REPORT
for the year ended 31 March 2021

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 during the 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.

Trustees Report of Activities for 2020~2021

Chairman's Introduction

It has been a difficult period as I don't need to remind you. In our relatively short history we have never experienced such restrictions to our activities. But of course, it all palls into insignificance when we look at the bigger picture.

The last AGM was cancelled, but this year having carried out several on-line Executive Committee meetings. I think that we have built up enough confidence to try it with our AGM.

Once again, I must thank everybody who has continued to be involved in the administrative and practical aspects of our association. Without you folk, we couldn't function. Of course, I have to especially thank the members of the Exec. Comm. who supply the inspiration and steadying hand for the activities that we have managed to carry out.

Most of our activities have been curtailed, but as the lockdown reduces, we are starting to pick up the pieces and hope to become as active as ever. The only venture that we initiated has been to offer parish councils the funding for wild flower seeds and tree planting in the public areas of their domain. The uptake has been a little disappointing: however East Budleigh has responded with enthusiasm. Newton Poppleford are still in the running. If any of you have any pet project, for the benefit of the community, which we may consider, please let us know.

During the last year, we have been joined on the Exec. Comm. by Chris Hodgson, who has taken up the reins of chair of the Natural Environmental Committee, following on from David Hatch who has stepped down. Also Rosemary Jerrard who has joined us as Minutes Secretary. Jane Connick has become the organising leader of the walks. Most of us don't realize the enormous amount of planning which takes place for this, one of our most well-known activities, before the actual walk.

One of the objectives of the association, is to 'promote high standards of planning and architecture in or affecting our area of benefit'. Sadly, since Nicola Daniel has stepped down from this task after many years of energetic monitoring and crusading, we have been unable to carry out this important part of our constitution.

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Chairman's Introduction, *continued*

Subject to the agreement of the AGM, the Executive Committee are proposing that I continue for a fourth year as chairman. As you will recall the term of office is normally for three years. This is because nobody has put their name forward for this position. To make the transition to chairman less daunting, again subject to AGM approval, we are proposing that we elevate Haylor Lass, our existing vice-chairman to the role of President. As he has held the vice-chair position since 2008, he knows more about the association than any of us.

The biggest event in our recent history is the Lower Otter Restoration Project which has now commenced. Much activity is taking place as the first phase involves the drilling of boreholes. As I mentioned in the last newsletter, it has been quite a divisive subject, for many of our members, but we still continue to believe that there is a certain inevitability.

Bob Wiltshire, Chairman

Natural Environment

I don't think the NEC has actually met this last year due to Covid-19 restrictions. Nonetheless, a few things have happened which fall within the remit of this Committee. A new Gazebo has been presented to the OVA, which is a distinct improvement on the old one as it is more substantial, provides cover from inclement weather and has the Associations name emblazoned on it. We are extremely grateful to the West Country Rivers Trust for this new acquisition and hope to be able to use it in the not too-distant future. In addition, in association with the Clinton Devon Estates, an estuary clear-up was organised last September which was attended by about 30 socially-distanced volunteers and a considerable amount of rubbish was collected.

The aging Scots Pine trees on the Clump in Otterton have been of concern for some years. They are an important local landmark. Geoff Porter managed to get 14 Scot's Pine seedlings and these were planted on the Clump last September. They survived the winter well and we are hoping that they will come through the current drought period.

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Natural Environment, *continued*

The Association also decided to try and encourage local communities to grow wild flower meadows for pollinators and offered local villages money towards the purchase of the seed. A few did take up the offer but others declined. Possible reasons for this were lack of suitable areas and the need for upkeep but the Association is hoping to encourage more communities to take this on next year.

In most years, one of the main activities of OVA members in association with the EC has been balsam bashing, attempting to reduce - if not actually eradicate - Himalayan Balsam. Because of the need for social distancing, this has been somewhat curtailed this year but some progress was made under the guidance of Patrick Hamilton.

Of course, one of the greatest changes that occurred during the last 12 months was the agreement by East Devon District Council to LORP in November. Due to the increasing threat of flooding in the Lower Otter Valley, mainly from rising sea levels but also from the increased likelihood of flooding due to heavier rain-storms, the owners of the land, Clinton Devon Estates, in association with the Environmental Agency, had applied to allow this area to become a natural flood plain. The application was unanimously agreed by the Council after much public debate and work has already started on preparing the land. This should be completed either late in 2022 or the Spring of 2023. This will make major changes to the ecology of the Otter Valley and members of the EC are keen to help monitor these changes.

Chris Hodgson

The OVA Himalayan Balsam Project had an excellent year despite COVID. The Colaton Raleigh tributary is under control and we were able to expand our work in the Dalditch - Knowle valley. Volunteers, as always played the key role and anyone who fancies good exercise and conversation in the fresh air doing a useful piece of environmental work should contact Patrick Hamilton via the OVA website. That is also the location for his customary Annual Report giving details of last year's project progress.

Patrick Hamilton

Walking with the OVA, 2020-2021 review

Due to Covid-19 restrictions we were only able to lead walks between July and December 2020 (and not during the lockdown between 5th November and 2nd December). This means that our statistics for year ending 31 March 2021 are roughly one third those of the previous year. In the 12 months ended 31/3/21, 197 walkers undertook a total of 21 walks covering a total of 1,392 miles with an average of 9 attendees per walk.

The walks we did lead proved very popular. Covid-19 restrictions meant we had to limit numbers on each walk to 12 or, at the leader's discretion, to a maximum of 6. Walkers had to book in advance and so walks were usually "full" and some had waiting lists. This has added managing bookings to the programme organiser's role.

Our wonderful team of volunteer walk leaders have proved to be flexible and tolerant of the need to postpone and reschedule walks, of the need to stay local and obey Covid-19 restrictions. We thank them, and the walkers who joined us, and adapted to walking in a socially distanced and Covid-safe way. As car-sharing and public transport are best avoided at the moment, the customary more distant walks were abandoned this year, and the opportunity has been taken to explore our very local area more thoroughly.

An innovation in 2021 to make communication easier is a dedicated email address for the Walk Team: walks@ova.org.

Stella French and Heather Fereday stepped down from their roles at the end of 2020 – a huge thank you to them for all their hard work over the last four years. Jane Connick has taken on Heather's role of organising the programme and walk bookings; and Jon Roseway is picking up Stella's role with photographs and walk reports.

Penny Kurowski and the Walk Team,
Jane Connick, Paul Kurowski and Jon Roseway

Membership Report

With April subscriptions received, the OVA has 810 paid up members as we start the 2021 membership year. We ended 2020 membership year with 858 paid up members, but sadly I have been notified recently of several that had passed away over the last year.

There are several cash or cheque paying members who have yet to pay their subscriptions, often the April newsletter is a reminder, plus some members that cancelled their standing orders but didn't inform us they were leaving. These various numbers account for the difference.

The OVA has one of the largest memberships for a civic amenity society, but to maintain this, we need a regular influx of new members. So please remember to mention the OVA to new friends or neighbours and encourage them to join, an application form is available to print from the OVA Website.

Clive Bowman, Membership Secretary

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.

Policy on Reserves

The OVA aims to build up sufficient reserves:
£10,000 is held as a contingency for unexpected eventualities;
£10,000 is allocated to fund worthwhile projects in the Lower Otter Valley;
the remainder is to meet occasional shortfalls in our regular activities.

Treasurer's Report

This has been an unusual year for us all and the OVA finances are no exception. Our events, talks and the Christmas Party were curtailed or abandoned altogether. We have not published newsletters when there has been no activity to report.

Thank you to all our members who have continued their subscriptions. We have tried to make use of this income by encouraging the parish councils to plant wildflowers where they have available land. This has not proved the success we had hoped for: East Budleigh being the only parish to take up our offer to date.

The OVA committee have decided to change the accounting procedure that has been used for many years from an Accruals basis to Receipts and Payments. Both methods of accounting are acceptable to the Charity Commission but changing to receipts and payments makes production of the annual accounts a more simple process for the treasurer.

The remaining stock of Harry Lane maps were passed to Fairlynch Museum during the year as we were no longer finding a market for them. The value of our remaining stock of books, £142, was written off the accounts. Sales of publications will appear as receipts in the accounts in future.

It has not been found possible to submit claims for Gift Aid on membership subscriptions for 2 years, but they will be submitted shortly. I urge all members to complete the new Gift Aid declaration included in the April 2021 newsletter in order to update our records.

Assets at the close of the financial year stand at £25,118. Of this £10,000 is held as a contingency for unexpected eventualities, £10,000 is allocated to fund worthwhile projects in the Lower Otter Valley and the remainder is to meet occasional shortfalls in our regular activities.

I would like to thank Brian Leveridge again for his assistance in preparing these accounts and ensuring that everything is in order and helping with the change to running the accounts using the receipts and payments method.

Martin Smith, Treasurer

24 April 2021

Otter Valley Association ~ Registered Charity No: 278266
Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

	2021	2020
	£	£
Incoming Resources		
Membership	4252	4262
Donations	5	25
Surplus on Talks		261
Surplus on Events		64
Surplus/(deficit) on Publications	(27)	67
Norman Family Trust (Heritage Proj)	343	
BS Town Council (HB)	100	
Gift Aid	(750)	750
Interest	109	47
	<u>4032</u>	<u>5476</u>
Resources Expended		
Newsletters	766	2620
Affiliation Fees	125	125
Insurance	368	336
Website Maintenance	360	300
AGM		0
Donations		0
Administration	602	626
Schools transport		600
First Aid training		12
St Peter's wildlife sanctuary		100
East Budleigh hall memorial tree		77
The Clump fencing & trees		241
East Budleigh wildflowers	327	
	<u>2548</u>	<u>5037</u>
Net Surplus for Year	1484	439
General Fund		
Balance at Start of Year	23,634	23,195
Balance at End of Year	25,118	23,634

Balance Sheet at 31 March 2021

	2021	2020
	£	£
Current Assets		
Stock of Books	0	142
Debtors & Prepayments	0	1516
Cash at Bank	25,118	22,551
	<u>25,118</u>	<u>24,209</u>
Current Liabilities		
Creditors & Accruals	<u>0</u>	<u>575</u>
Net Assets	<u>25,118</u>	<u>23,634</u>
Represented by:		
General Fund (Unrestricted)	<u>25,118</u>	<u>23,634</u>

Notes:

1. The accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis. Figures are not comparable with the previous year which were prepared on an accruals basis.
2. The cost of the remaining stock of books has been written off for accounting purposes.
3. No remuneration has been paid to any Trustee during the year.

Approved by the Committee (electronically) on 24 April 2021
and signed on their behalf by:



Martin Smith, Treasurer

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 2020.

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



24th April 2021

B E Leveridge C.A.
44 Honey Park Road
Budleigh Salterton
EX9 6EG

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
Roger Saunders	Hon. Secretary
Martin Smith	Hon. Treasurer
Jacqui Baldwin	Newsletter Editor
Peter Baldwin	Talks Organiser
Clive Bowman	Membership Secretary
Chris Hodgson	Natural Environment
George Maddaford	Budleigh Salterton
Pat & Geoff Porter	Otterton
Jon Roseway	East Budleigh

There are vacancies for an Events organiser, a Planning lead and a Colaton Raleigh Parish Representative

This Trustees Report was approved by the chairman
on 9th May 2021
for publication on request and on the website.