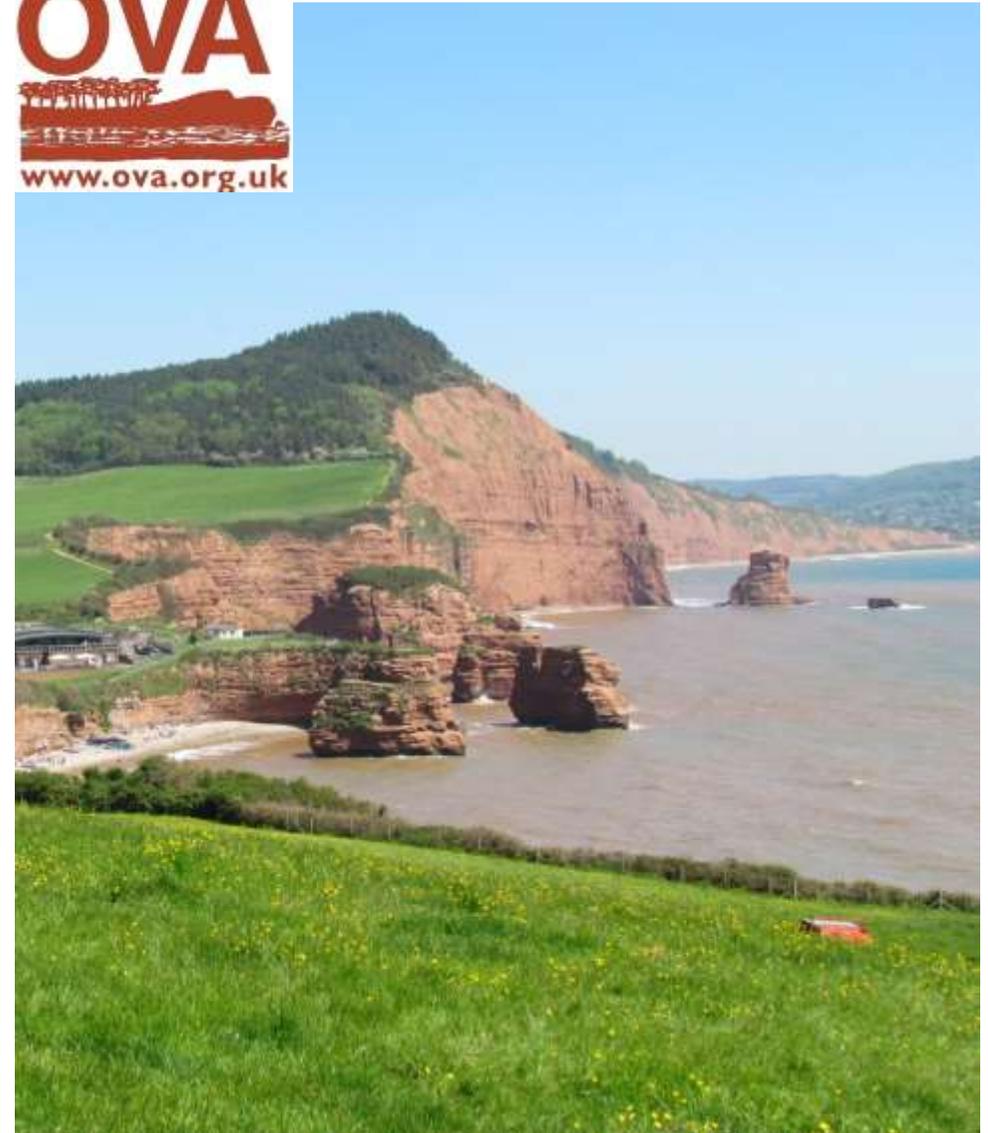


**Annual General Meeting
Wednesday 18th May 2016
The Masonic Hall, Budleigh Salterton**

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 13 May 2015
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 10th May 2017 at East Budleigh Village Hall.

The meeting will be followed by refreshments
and presentation on the FAB Project.
(France-Alderney-Britain Electricity Interconnector)



**The Otter Valley Association
TRUSTEES' REPORT
for the year ended 31 March 2016**

parish reps. and particularly any local opinion.

The Hon. Treasurer advised the members that the last year's expenditure included brush clearing equipment for Himalayan Balsam, first aid kits for walk leaders, hire of halls and publicity for local heritage assets, the All Saints church bell appeal at East Budleigh, the running of buses to the Pebblebed Heathlands for local children. He wished to thank Brian Leveridge for auditing our accounts.

5. Election of Officers. The Chairman asked the Assistant Minutes Secretary to report on nominations by the required closing date, 14 days prior to the AGM. Only one nomination was received for the position of Chair, Vice Chair and Hon. Treasurer, with no nominations for Hon. Secretary.

Chairman, Roger Saunders. Vice Chair, Haylor Lass.
Honorary Treasurer, Trevor Waddington.

The Chair agreed to accept the role of Acting Hon. Secretary as from the end of the meeting, until a member could be found to fill this post. As no other nominations were made, the appointments were considered as having been agreed.

6. Election of Executive Committee Members. The Assistant Minutes Secretary said that the following members had been nominated to fill remaining posts on the EC. Clive Bowman, David Daniel, George Maddaford, Bob Wiltshire, Jon Roseway. Patrick Hamilton agreed to remain on as Chair of the Environmental Committee until such time as a replacement could be found. All these members had been nominated and seconded. As no other nominations had been made the appointments were considered to have been agreed, by the members present. The Chair wished to point out that vacancies existed for publicity officer, village reps for Colaton Raleigh and Otterton in addition to those previously mentioned.
7. Appointment of independent auditor. Having agreed to be Independent Examiner of the accounts for a further year, Mr Leveridge was proposed by Roger Saunders and seconded by Clive Bowman. It was agreed by a show of hands.
8. AOB. There was none.
9. Next AGM. Will be held at the Masonic Hall, Budleigh Salterton on 11th May 2016.

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 2015~16

Chairman's Introduction

In preparation for the AGM I like to look back over what the OVA has accomplished in the last 12 months. In my Chairman's report for April 2015 I opened with thanking our many volunteers. I make no apology for doing the same thing now. Our volunteers have allowed the OVA to maintain its program of walks, talks, events, natural environment initiatives and planning responses, book sales, web site management and newsletter distribution. Thank-you for your dedication, time and effort – you are essential for the OVA to function.

We have a strong Executive Committee, but we still have vacancies to fill (Village Reps for Otterton and Colaton Raleigh, Honorary Sec. and Events Sec.). Please contact me if you are interested, I would be happy to talk to you about the positions.

There are more detailed reports on our activities elsewhere in this report, but I will give a brief overview here. The walks team have managed to top last year's successes with even more walks (+10%), more walkers and an increase in total miles walked to over 4,000. All without permanently losing anyone as far as I know. And we have continued our winter talks program, covering a variety of topics. Our most popular talk (held jointly with Otterton Garden Club), about the River Otter Beavers, was so well attended that we had to turn away a few people because the hall was full. Graham Knapton has managed the talks program since 2012, but he is now stepping down. Thank-you Graham for the varied and interesting selection of talks you have provided us with. I am happy to report that Geoff Lake will be taking over for next year's program.

Although hampered by the lack of an organiser, we have managed to run a few events. The tour of Popham's Farm (June 2015) was very well supported, and a behind the scenes visit to Donkey Sanctuary (March 2016) was thoroughly enjoyed by the participants.

As always, planning issues have been a significant focus for the Executive Committee. With the approval of East Devon District Council's Local Plan this year we hope to see a more managed approach to development in the area. The OVA is also committed to helping with the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans in our area, and are currently actively involved with the Budleigh Salterton plan.

Patrick Hamilton organised this annual event and also has coordinated the Himalayan Balsam eradication project on behalf of the Natural Environment Committee of the OVA. We have been funding the school buses taking children to the Pebblebed Heathlands from Budleigh Salterton, East Budleigh, Otterton and Woodbury. We have had a very interesting series of talks, organised by Graham Knapton. These have included joint talks with the Fairlynch Museum. Our exhibit at the museum is being enhanced by a touch screen presentation. We have collaborated with various organisations including the Committee for the Preservation of Rural England, Devon, local councils, Devon County Council, Clinton Devon Estates, and the AONB partnership. A proposed farm visit to Popham's Farm (Clinton Devon Estates) is now fully subscribed to. The walks programme on 10th July, is being lead by Toby Taylor the warden from RSPB. Sales of Association literature have seen a huge increase since going under the stewardship of Andrew Beresford.

We are looking to the future and examining ways of involving the membership more, including possibly launching an OVA Facebook page. Circulation of monthly updates of the Exec Committee meetings is being considered, however it should be remembered that, salient points from the meetings are included in the Chairmen's section of the newsletter. He pointed out that a number of positions in the Exec Committee were unfilled, particularly that of Hon. Secretary. We regret has the present Hon. Secretary, Iain Ure, has not put his name up for re-election. During his time in office he proved to be both hard-working and enthusiastic. There is a lack of members prepared to take on the current running and the future of our Association is at risk.

Comments and statements from the floor included the following.

Chris Buckland, Member, wished to see the full Minutes of the EC published and made available to all members. He felt that there was an air of secrecy and members were not being engaged. Clive Bowman suggested a letters column in the newsletter, but it was pointed out that as the publication is quarterly, such communication would quickly become out of date. Andrew Beresford wondered if more link up between the walk leaders and the village reps, with contact addresses and numbers might result in new members. Nicola Daniel would like to see more information available about local planning matters from

OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the 36th Annual General Meeting

held at 7.30pm on 13th May 2015 in Otterton Village Hall

1. Present. Roger Saunders; Chairman. Haylor Lass; Vice Chairman. Trevor Waddington; Honorary Treasurer, 6 other members of the Executive Committee and a further 24 other members of the Association.
2. Apologies. Iain Ure, Dee Woods, Malcolm and Jennie Crabtree, Alan and Alice Huddart, Rosemary and David Hatch, Doug Cullen.
3. Matters arising. The use of direct-debits for membership subscriptions, rather than standing-orders. The Treasurer felt that this was too complicated and advised that standing-orders should remain the normal means of payment.
4. Annual Report including Trustees Report and Accounts.
The Chairman advised that reports from the individual committee chairmen were to be found in the Trustees' Report for the year ending 31st March 2015. The Chair thanked all the officers and members of the Executive Committee for all their hard work, which has resulted in making his job less onerous and more enjoyable. It has been an active year. A new website was created by David Daniel and Allan Huddart. The latter has now stood down and been replaced by our new webmaster Martin Smith. The membership fees have been increased, for the first time in many years, from £3 to £5 for individuals and £5 to £9 for families. Many more members email addresses have been received during the renewal process, which makes the communication of information to members easier. The Local Heritage Asset Project is now reaching finality, following the sterling work carried out by Dee Woods, Iain Ure, Nicola Daniel, Trevor Waddington and Jim Pithouse. The newsletter is now being published with the cover in colour. This has greatly enhanced the appearance of our magazine, thanks to the editor Haylor Lass. We welcome the new editor, Jackie Baldwin. We were sad to see the Parish Representative for East Budleigh, Christine Hadley, leave us, but welcome Jon Roseway as her successor. Mike Paddison and Chris Buckland have been very active organising walks both old and new and recruiting new walk leaders. The litter pick in March attracted 70-80 pickers and proved to be, as usual, very successful.

The Natural Environment Committee have continued their work on Himalayan Balsam clearance along the tributaries of the Otter, completed the annual litter pick and participated in Heath Week (with our best-supported walk of the year as well as a stand at family festival day despite atrocious weather).

During a busy year for membership and finances, we have completed our transfer from Nat West bank to Lloyds, with the Nat West account now closed. We have managed to bring most of our membership with us, despite the increase in annual fee and the fuss of completing new standing order forms. We hope now to be able to continue into the foreseeable future without the need for another increase.

On the IT side our beautiful website continues to function well both as an information resource for the membership and as an advertisement for the OVA. It is also the gateway to our expanding local history resource, OVApedia. The website is now supplemented by a Facebook page, offering more news items and an opportunity for the membership to post comments.

In conclusion we try to provide a program to suit all interests, whether hiking, working to improve the natural environment or listening to talks about the area. If you have suggestions about other things you would like to see please get in touch.

Roger Saunders

Planning

There are many initiatives affecting the future of planning matters taking place at both national and regional level that will affect the way the lower Otter Valley will look in a few years time.

As a result of potential changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) the OVA has made comments to the House of Lords Inquiry on the economics of the housing market and this can be viewed on the House of Lords website. We have also responded to another consultation on the effect changes would have in our area, particularly on the redefinition of affordable housing and the loosening of planning controls.

We can all breathe a sigh of relief that East Devon District Council's Local Plan is finally up and running and hopefully the pressure of ad-hoc planning applications by developers should be reduced. *continued over*

Neighbourhood Plans are being developed by Newton Poppleford, East Budleigh and Budleigh Salterton and there is the hope that, when these are up and running, local people will have an influence on the needs and development of housing in their area.

However, this year there have been many applications for larger scale developments in the area and the OVA has responded to each application taking into account national and local planning policies. As regards to garden infill the OVA generally responds to sensitive sites and those in a conservation area.

Finally, the next change to affect our area will come with the Devolution bid. Councillors from Devon and Somerset have come together with business men, educationalists and others to jointly bid for devolution “to secure greater control over skills, growth and employment in the region.” A Northern Powerhouse in the west country. This “Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership”- LEP- has been awarded £65.2 million. A worry to many people is that there has been no consultation and wonder how they have arrived at a figure of an additional 179,000 homes proposed for the region.

House of Parliament Conference

Two of us went to the Houses of Parliament to a conference on The Future of the Historic Environment, organised by Civic Voice. Speakers were from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic England, a representative from the House of Lords and Gryff Rhys Jones.

When the meeting was opened up to the floor it was once again refreshing to find that the lower Otter valley is not the only part of the country with problems. There was an overwhelming consensus at the conference that conservation areas do not offer enough protection to the houses and gardens in an area.

After the meeting I approached the Historic England representative to express the concerns of Budleigh Salterton residents that it is difficult to nationally list buildings built after 1840. This is a special problem in Budleigh Salterton where the housing stock is Victorian and early twentieth century with fine Arts and Crafts style.

Nicola Daniel

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
<i>vacancy</i>	Secretary
Trevor Waddington	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

During the year Jacqui Baldwin took over as Newsletter Editor. Although not an elected trustee, she attends meeting of the Executive Committee.

This Trustees Report was approved at the meeting of 26th April 2016 for publication at the Annual General Meeting and on the website.

**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 2016.

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 2016

Natural Environment

Himalayan Balsam

This was the fifth year in which the OVA has been committed to an assault on this invasive species in the Lower Otter Valley. In 2012, 2013 and 2014 the Environment Agency headed the project, contracting out the overall organization to FWAG SW (Farmers and Wildlife Advisory Group).

Sadly the project became a victim of the government's austerity measures and in 2015 it was left to the OVA, Clinton Devon Estates (CDE) and the small group in Newton Poppleford to continue the work, albeit just in the Lower Otter Valley. The group that had blossomed in 2013 under Dr Nick Ward in East Budleigh is in temporary (we hope) abeyance.

From June to October 2015 we continued to focus on the Colaton Raleigh Brook where we met our target of completing three sweeps from the highest known point at which Himalayan Balsam has been found in 2012 (above Stowford) right down through the village to the flood plain.

Meanwhile Iain Ure and a small team attacked with the OVA brushcutter from the confluence of the Colaton Brook with the Otter working upstream towards Colaton village. Detailed reports appear on the OVA website.

Our experiences match those of the Tale Valley Trust that has been clearing the largest tributary of the Otter (through Escot) since 2005. It is virtually impossible to eliminate this invasive species completely but each year the cleared areas expand and the task becomes easier. This is entirely the result of the efforts of our volunteers who deserve all our praise.

Up-valley from Newton Poppleford, the Tale Valley Trust (TVT) continue their work above Ottery St Mary and, encouragingly a small new group is working on the block between the TVT and the OVA/CDE in, for example, Fluxton.

Our work on Himalayan Balsam is always planned in coordination with Clinton Devon Estates and this will continue in 2016. The target for 2016 is to repeat our three sweeps of the whole Colaton Brook and if we can clear them with time to spare, help Newton Poppleford, East Budleigh and restart work on The Dalditch Brook.

continued overleaf

The **Annual Litter-pick** was again a successful and very worthwhile exercise. Some 50 or so volunteers braved quite cold conditions on 19th March 2016 to give the Otter estuary a spring clean. This event was organized by the OVA in cooperation with Clinton Devon Estates and EDDC. It is also supported by the charity “Beachelean” which provides the litter-picking implements to spare our ageing back muscles.

Patrick Hamilton
Acting-Chairman Natural Environment Committee.

Local Heritage Assets Listing Project

In 2014 a small team embarked on a local heritage asset listing project looking at street scene features, Victorian, Edwardian and Arts and Crafts style houses, rural buildings and other heritage features.

Nominations were received from the local councils and the community, as well as OVA members. Two local heritage consultation exhibitions were held in February 2015, and informed owners and the public about the 300 nominations that had been received for the draft list of local heritage assets.

The next stage of the project was to photograph all the nominations, and then assess them against the English Heritage selection criteria: rarity, age, aesthetic value, group value, historic association and evidential value.

In April 2016 the proposed detailed list of 239 local heritage assets in the lower Otter Valley were sent to the Conservation Officer at East Devon District Council for further consideration. East Devon District Council then has to agree and ratify the list of local heritage assets. This will be used when future development proposals are considered for planning permission in compliance with Local Plan policy EN8, which concerns the significance of heritage assets and their setting.

All the nominations can be viewed on the OVA website under the ‘Built Heritage’ section.

Dee Woods
Project Co-ordinator

Otter Valley Association ~ Registered Charity No: 278266

Balance Sheet at 31 March 2016

	2016	2015
	£	£
Current Assets		
Stock of books	1001	1068
Debtors & prepayments	1900	851
Cash at bank	<u>19344</u>	<u>17722</u>
	<u>22245</u>	<u>19641</u>
Current Liabilities		
Creditors & accruals	<u>23</u>	<u>340</u>
Net Assets	<u>22222</u>	<u>19301</u>
Represented by:		
General Fund (Unrestricted)	<u>22222</u>	<u>19301</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 26th April, 2016
and signed on their behalf by:

Trevor Waddington
Hon Treasurer

Otter Valley Association ~ Registered Charity No: 278266
Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2016

	2016	2015
	£	£
Incoming Resources		
Subscriptions	4773	2607
Donations and Grants	895	1856
Surplus on talks	76	65
Surplus on events	94	37
Surplus on book sales	261	392
Gift Aid	900	589
Interest	121	126
	<u>7120</u>	<u>5672</u>
Resources Expended		
Newsletters	2516	2072
Affiliation fees	123	85
Insurance	252	252
Website maintenance	18	312
AGM and Minor Events	86	65
Donations	200	250
School Transport to Pebblebeds	-	565
Himalayan Balsam Project	-	1250
Local Heritage Assets Project	-	744
Walks: 1 st Aid Courses and Kits	-	440
Hatchard-Smith Blue Plaque	154	-
Administration	850	785
	<u>4199</u>	<u>6820</u>
Net Surplus/Deficit for Year	2921	-1148
General Fund		
Balance at start of year	<u>19301</u>	<u>20449</u>
Balance at end of year	<u>22222</u>	<u>19301</u>

Walks Review

The Programme of Walks has continued to expand to meet the needs of an increasing number of OVA walkers with at least one and sometimes two walks per week, throughout the year. During the period June 2014 to July 2015 the average number of people on each walk was 10.2, an increase on 2013-2014. That number has been maintained this year, on walks over distances from 3 to 11 miles, on several different days of the week. A collection of interesting statistics from previous years can be viewed on the website.

Although it is gratifying to serve a hard core of regular walkers, it is always encouraging when that pool is increased by new, sometimes initially tentative, new members. For the first time, in July, we organised a walk, in support of Pebblebed Heath week, centred on Woodbury Common, to visit all seven Commons in the vicinity. 32 people turned up, many of who were, at the time, not OVA members. Our leading skills were put to the test and the successful walk resulted in an increase in the number of regular OVA walkers.

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. Last year we completed the 63 mile Exe Valley Way in 7 stages, and we are currently tackling Devon's 117 mile Coast to Coast Trail in 12 stages. In April the Association organised its second residential walking holiday, when an increased number of 20 members enjoyed four days walking based at West Woolley, on the North Cornwall / Devon border.

We are able to provide such an increasingly comprehensive service due to our Walk Leaders who lend us their enthusiasm, expertise and experience. This year we have welcomed five new Leaders who have shared their passion for the great outdoors with our members, bringing the current active total to 27. New applicants are always trained and encouraged.

Everyone is welcome on OVA walks. You can view our Aim and Objectives on the Walks pages of the OVA website, and keep abreast of "Breaking News" with the constantly updated Programme of Walks. "Walk Reports" on the drop down menu will take you to Reports and photographs of previous walks, a selection of which, also appear in the Newsletter, where you can find contact details for the Walk Organisers.

continued overleaf

Finally, as we forecast, we would like to confirm that we will be standing down from the posts of Co-Walks Organisers at the AGM of 2017. We have thoroughly enjoyed being able to share our passion for walking with OVA Members for what will be a four year term, but believe that successful organisations should regularly introduce new personnel, if they are to remain vibrant.

Mike Paddison & Chris Buckland

Membership

This has been the final part of the project to transfer members who pay by Bank Standing Order, from Nat West to Lloyds, and ensuring they are paying the correct membership fee. All new members automatically join using the Lloyds Bank Standing Order Form. It has been a mammoth project, trying to track that each member has been contacted with the correct details and a replacement form.

It has also seen members making much more use of the membership@ova.org.uk email address, which comes directly to the Membership Secretary, without having to be forwarded from the info@ova.org.uk mailbox. It also means I can email out to members or reply, and they know from the address that it is the OVA emailing. Any changes to member's details can be quickly made and confirmed back, without any cost for postage.

April is the busiest time for the Membership Secretary, as all the members' standing order payments have to be recorded to ensure their membership continues, and with over 800+ members, it can take some time. This is why it has been important for members who updated online, continue to use their membership number and last name as their bank reference.

Each year I get payments where there is no way of identifying who made the payment. Hopefully, this year after changing banks, these orphan payments will cease. Going forward, members can be put in touch with each other via the Membership Database, following the guidance in the Data Protection Act 2006. So if you have lost touch with someone, email the Membership Secretary, and I will see what I can do. I don't give out members details on request, but contact the searched for member and leave it for them to follow up.

Clive Bowman
Membership Secretary

Treasurer's Report

The Association had a satisfactory financial year, the surplus reflecting income from increased membership fees. The OVA's National Westminster Bank account was closed in November 2015, the balance being transferred to the Lloyds Bank account.

Donations were made to All Saints PCC East Budleigh and to Otterton Village Hall. A bequest of £150 was gratefully received.

End of year assets stand at £22,222 which includes a reserve fund of £12,257 held in an interest-bearing account. The Independent Examiner recommends that the Executive Committee consider writing-down the value of publications stock carried.

My special thanks are due to Brian Leveridge for his assistance in preparing the accounts for the AGM.

Trevor Waddington, Hon Treasurer

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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.