

Reference and administrative information

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

Trustees

The following people served as Trustees during the year:

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

By order of the Trustees

N D Daniel

Chairman (Acting)

OVA



The Otter Valley Association

TRUSTEES' REPORT

for the year ended 31 March 2014

Otter Valley Association

**The 35th Annual General Meeting
7.30pm on Wednesday 14th May 2014
in the Village Hall, East Budleigh**

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 15 May 2013
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. Consideration of membership fees.
8. Any Other Business
9. Date of next AGM ~ Wednesday 13th May 2015 proposed.

The meeting will be followed by refreshments and an illustrated talk
by Mike Williams on the Lower Otter Restoration Project.

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 which 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.

OTTER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the 34th Annual General Meeting

held at 7.30pm on 15th May 2013 in the Peter Hall, Budleigh Salterton

1 Present: Nicola Daniel Acting Chairman, Haylor Lass, Acting Vice Chairman, Roger Saunders, Treasurer, David Daniel Acting Hon Secretary, a further 3 members of the Executive Committee and 37 other members of the Association.

2 Apologies: Angela Symes, Christine Hadley, Trevor Waddington, Clive & Mo Bowman, Jon Jones, Janet Leigh, Chris Buckland, Brian & Rowan Turnbull, Stuart & Margaret Yerrell, Brian Hawkes.

3 The Minutes of the AGM held on 2nd May 2012 were taken as read and agreed as a true record, proposed by Robert Wiltshire, seconded by Robert Sellin, and the agreement of the membership present was unanimous.

4 Matters Arising: At the last year's AGM the new Executive Committee (EC) were asked to consider making the minutes of the EC available to members. This request was considered at the first meeting following the AGM. It was decided to make the minutes of AGMs, once approved, available on our website as these are open meetings. The Charity Commission guidance is that EC meetings are meetings of the Trustees and are closed to members. It was decided, therefore, not to make these minutes available to members. The Chairman pointed out that the purpose of the village reps is to act as a channel of communication from members to the EC and it is regrettable that, currently, there are no reps for Colaton Raleigh or Otterton. The website, the newsletter and occasionally the press are the ways decisions are made known to members. Any formal planning comments are of course openly available on the EDDC website. There is no easy mechanism for distributing information to our 1100 members only.

5 Annual Report: The Chairman pointed out that copies of the Otter Valley Association Trustees' Report for the year ended 31st March 2013 were in the possession of attendees and the narrative closely followed her Chairman's address printed in the previous newsletter. It was not therefore read out.

The Chairman drew attention to a number of events that had occurred since writing the report.

There is a proposal being put before the East Devon AONB partnership for a National Park incorporating the Jurassic coast & the adjacent AONBs. This is the beginning of a long process. The EC have discussed this and are unanimously in agreement to support the proposal. It would give our area a more thoughtful approach to planning than the free for all that exists at the moment. It will also promote sustainable tourism in the area and fits with the constitutional aims of the OVA.

Another development is that action is being taken to sort out the water quality of BS beach. Members will be aware from the newsletter that the EC have been anxious about this and the water quality of the River Otter for a long time and have expressed OVA concerns to councillors over the past year. This action will involve several agencies including EDDC and the OVA will be actively involved.

The EC is very pleased that Sam Bridgewater, the new Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Manager, has settled very quickly into his post. Patrick Hamilton, NEC chairman, is collaborating with him and other agencies to eradicate the scourge of Himalayan Balsam. Following up a longstanding ambition of the OVA, Sam has contacted all the local schools in the area and children from every school will visit the Pebblebed Heaths to learn about their local environment. The OVA is to provide the money for the transport.

Membership is vibrant. 273 new members have joined since our last 2010 new members' party. So another new members party will be held October.

We have attempted to make people more aware of their environment by investing in the Interpretation Panels in the Longboat Shelter and those at the Ottermouth, both widely read by locals & tourists. The full morning of talks on the Environmental Aspects of the River Otter had 130 attendees, many non-members. And, of course there was the Litter Pick where young and old, members & non-members clean up the river. This year 13 tyres were hauled out.

A major concern has to be water- flooding and water quality. The Vice Chairman, Haylor Lass, a retired water engineer, has represented the OVA at the talks CDE have had on the Heycock report- a study they commissioned on answers to flooding in the lower Otter valley.

The OVA has a seat on the AONB partnership. We are disturbed that the AONB seldom comments on planning matters and, in this regard, fails to give this area the protection we feel it should have.

Having thanked those who are leaving committees: Gill Speare who has coordinated newsletter distribution and sat on the Events Committee for 8 years; John Jones who organised Walks and was BS rep for many years; the Chairman listed vacancies.

Editor of the newsletter, as Haylor is only editor pro tem.

Village reps for Colaton Raleigh & Otterton.

Book Distributor as our present distributor has commitments outside the area.

Distributors for Exmouth newsletters as we spent £100 in postage in April.

Members for the natural environment committee

Members for the Events committee. People with new ideas for visits.

People interested in planning.

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.

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 2014.

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.

B Leveridge

29th April 2014

6 Treasurer's Report

Roger Saunders then presented the Treasurer's Report, mentioning the various sources of income to the OVA and the success of the many events in contributing to the income.

Acceptance of the Trustees' Report and the Accounts was proposed by Roger Lendon, seconded by Alan Huddart and agreed unanimously.

The Chairman thanked Roger for all his hard work over the past three years.

7 Election of Officers: The Chairman explained that two of the four officer roles would be filled by existing EC members taking them on an 'Acting' basis. There had also only been one nomination for other posts in the EC (indeed there were potential vacancies) by the required closing date, 14 days prior to the AGM, so there would be no election. The Hon Secretary read out the Nominations of Officers as follows:

Acting Chairman: Nicola Daniel

Vice Chairman: Haylor Lass

Treasurer: Trevor Waddington

Acting Hon Secretary: David Daniel

The following were nominated to fill the remaining posts on the Executive and, being not more than the number provided in the Constitution, were also declared elected:- Clive Bowman, Mo Bowman, Christine Hadley, Patrick Hamilton, George Maddaford, Roger Saunders and Bob Wiltshire. Acceptance of the appointment of these officers and members was proposed by Robin Holt and seconded by Maureen Wiltshire, and agreed unanimously.

8 Independent Examiner: Thanks were expressed to Brian Leveridge for acting again as Independent Examiner of the accounts. Having agreed to be reappointed for a further year, Mr Leveridge was proposed by Roger Saunders and seconded by Stuart Lovett, with the agreement of the membership present was unanimously.

9 Any Other Business:

10 Date of next meeting: Wednesday 14th May 2014 at the East Budleigh Village Hall.

There being no other business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.58pm. Following the refreshments, members enjoyed a talk on weird and wonderful entries in OVApedia.

Trustees Report of Activities for 2013~14

Chairman' Introduction ~ Nicky Daniel

THIS YEAR has been a very active and productive year for the association with the walks, talks and events being very well supported by the members and the fight against Himalayan Balsam and the monitoring of the River Otter continuing apace. This success has only come about with the volunteer efforts of so many members. The walks leaders, newsletter editor, the newsletter co-ordinators and distributors, talks organiser, technical equipment organiser, events organisers, web-site monitor, wild life monitors, village representatives, monthly posters producer and distributors in the villages, Himalayan Balsam pullers etc. etc. The Trustees would like to give a massive thank you to them all. I would also like to thank the Trustees, ie the Executive Committee members, who have supported me this year where planning matters have taken up an ever increasing amount of the Executive Committee time. The committee has also discussed at length the issues of flooding along the Otter and elected Haylor Lass to represent the OVA on discussions on the Lower Otter Project, initiated by Clinton Devon Estates. The committee also responded to the planning application by the Environment Agency for flood defences at the Otter mouth. It has kept abreast of developments of the water quality issues at Ladram Bay and Budleigh Salterton beaches which may fail the EU designated safe bathing beaches criteria next year.

The committee have collaborated once again with other charities. Fairlynch Museum joined with the OVA in two very successful talks, one on the East Devon AONB and the other on the influence of the environment on the lives of people in the valley and conversely how people shaped the environment. The committee also have collaborated with the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust to finance local schoolchildren to visit the heaths, learn of their origins, their plants and wildlife and then to produce exciting written and art work. The Himalayan Balsam project is a joint project with the Pebblebed Heaths and many groups from along the river. The annual Litter Pick involves the Pebblebed Heaths, the East Devon AONB and EDDC Street Scene.

The OVA again sponsored a very successful evening of local writers reading their work to a large and enthusiastic audience.

This is my third Trustees Report and I once again ask for more volunteers to sit on our Executive Committee. We need new blood and new ideas. We need a representative for Colaton Raleigh, an Events Committee Chairman and a Publicity Officer. Also, if you are worried about the pressure on building in our part of the AONB please come and join me in a Planning and Built Environment Committee.

Otter Valley Association ~ Registered Charity No: 278266 Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2014

	2014 £	2013 £
Incoming Resources		
Subscriptions	2717	2974
Donations received	799	2835
Surplus on talks	300	149
Surplus on visits	0	130
Surplus on events	68	90
Surplus on book sales	161	301
Interpretation Panels	0	760
Gift Aid	600	700
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	4645	7939
Resources Expended		
Newsletters	2040	1662
Publications	0	0
Affiliation fees	153	153
Insurance	252	252
Website maintenance	2712	90
AGM/New Members party	312	110
Jubilee Field	0	0
Donations given	400	855
School Transport to Pebblebeds	413	0
Other administration	574	731
Audio/Visual Purchases	348	1360
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	7204	5213
Net Surplus/Deficit for Year	-2559	2726
General Fund		
Balance at start of year	<hr/>	<hr/>
	23008	20282
Balance at end of year	<hr/>	<hr/>
	20449	23008

Balance Sheet at 31 March 2014

	2014	2013
	£	£
Current Assets		
Stock of books	1142	1255
Debtors & prepayments	1287	795
Cash at bank	<u>19426</u>	<u>21697</u>
	<u>21855</u>	<u>23747</u>
Current Liabilities		
Creditors & accruals	<u>1406</u>	<u>739</u>
Net Assets	<u>20449</u>	<u>23008</u>
Represented by:		
General Fund (Unrestricted)	<u>20449</u>	<u>20282</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 29th April, 2014
and signed on their behalf by:

Trevor Waddington
Hon Treasurer

Events Committee

The Events Committee have organised a very varied programme which has been well supported. Graham Knapton, our Talks Organiser, has put together, to large audiences, subjects such as Climate Change, Curious Dartmoor and the Green Lanes of Devon as well as the joint Fairlynch/OVA talks. The Trustees thank him and Clive Bowman, our technical expert, for their hard work. Clive has spent a long time trying to improve the presentation of our talks and the OVA has invested in a new screen, a much improved sound system (it's first test being in St Peters Church in 2013), and a more mobile control of visual projection.

The Trustees are very grateful to the two Walks Organisers, Chris Buckland and Mike Paddison, who have enthusiastically given members walks for those of varying physical prowess. They set up an introductory workshop for walks leaders. Of course, this winter has not been the ideal time for walking, with very muddy footpaths, but already there is an exciting programme in place for the summer months. Chris and Mike have collaborated with the Kings Arms, Otterton, to devise walks for the pub's new venture of walking holidays.

Lizzie Everett-Wright organised a very interesting afternoon at Poltimore House. Members were given a tour of the house and gardens followed by tea and cakes. We hope to go again in a few years' time to see progress.

Planning and Built Environment

This year has seen unprecedented pressure for housing development in the lower Otter valley due to the local authority not having an approved Local Plan in place. The OVA objected to housing developments in Newton Poppleford as the village lies within the East Devon AONB. Similarly the OVA has responded to the Village Developments Plan as East Budleigh villagers voted for a brownfield site and the local authority have instead ignored their vote and chosen a prime agricultural site. Once again contrary to policies in an AONB.

The OVA, along with over 30 others, objected to an application for a house in the garden of a row of mid-nineteenth century houses in a conservation area in Budleigh Salterton. This was passed by EDDC which makes your Trustees query the value of a conservation area designation as they also question the value of the AONB designation. The policies in place to protect these areas are ignored by the local authority.

Natural Environment Committee

This was the second year of the Otter Valley **Himalayan Balsam Project** sponsored by the Environment Agency and the NEC's annual report (illustrated with maps and photographs) appears on the OVA website. We continued to play a role in the Lower Otter, again focusing on the Colaton Raleigh brook where we consolidated last year's achievements in the upper valley and extended downstream to the village.

A most encouraging development was the emergence of a residents' group in East Budleigh (Dr Nick Ward) that has made excellent progress. We have close relations with this new group and continue to cooperate with groups on the Back Brook, both in the lower reaches (Newton Poppleford; Ted Swan) and the upper (Hawkerland; Rob Jones). Another encouraging development was the appointment of Dr Sam Bridgewater as Conservation Officer to Clinton Devon / Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust. He arranged the participation of some 40 Royal Marines in the Opening Day assault; organized an excellent seminar for all volunteers at The Otter Inn (CR) in late August (OVA contributed financially as well as conceptually); and has produced a digital map of progress in 2013. In 2014 it is planned to complement these efforts in the tributaries with a demonstration plot on the main river banks to heighten awareness of the campaign; and to invest in a brushcutter to improve the efficiency of field activities.

Late in the year (and into early 2014) the **Water Vole Project** was disrupted by flooding which stranded or destroyed rafts. EDDC's Jim Hunter has been replaced by Nathan Robinson, but financial cuts are making it difficult to maintain the level of support for this project.

In June 2013, the OVA (with both finance and helpers) supported Dr Sam Bridgewater (Clinton Devon Estates) in an imaginative project for Primary Schools which involved **field ecology seminars** on East Budleigh Common. Much enthusiasm was engendered.

The **annual litter pick** on the Otter Estuary in early April 2013 was again a successful and very worthwhile exercise.

History

Our history archive, OVApedia, continues to expand steadily and to attract enquires from researchers overseas. The latest was from Christopher Long who lives in Normandy. He and French colleagues are researching the history of the Abbey at Mont Saint-Michel in Normandy and its mediaeval 'daughter' priories in the Channel Islands, Mont Saint-Michel in Cornwall and at Otterton. In March Christopher came to stay a few days to meet our local experts, Gerald Millington and Roger Lendon, and to exchange historical research.

Web Site Update

It is now six years since we launched an OVA website we could manage ourselves, ie a web site which OVA volunteers could keep up to date with news and events and which, therefore, incurred low running costs. The Executive Committee has decided that the time is right to redevelop the site, once again using the local social enterprise company COSMIC. This is a company that returns its profits to the community by way of encouraging IT projects.

The new site will have a new look, making greater use of images, and will adapt automatically to provide an optimal display on widescreen PCs, tablets and smartphones in both landscape and portrait modes. Our web site is our shop window and vital to recruiting new members. We use it to promote our role in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and it is increasingly being accessed. Keeping it looking professional and up to date is important. You have to do nothing except be prepared for a new look in due course – all the old contents will be retained but we will find it easier to add more in the future.

Membership

The membership of the OVA is now 1078. Our diligent Membership Secretary, Clive Bowman, keeps track of members as they move around, join or leave the OVA and has had a good spring-clean so we know the number is accurate. Over the last year or so, a new database has been built that meets with the latest data protection requirements, and is also able to offer additional information reports to the Trustees of the OVA.

The essential requirement of this new database has been meeting the more rigorous Data Protection Act requirements, and at the same time providing more reporting options for the OVA EC to identify and contact specific types of members, eg inviting those members who had not been to a 'New Members Party'.

Treasurer's Report

The Association had a satisfactory financial year, ending with a drawdown of £2559. The main reason for this additional expenditure was the need to upgrade the OVA's web site; a one-off cost which should not need to be repeated for several years. Membership numbers were also slightly down on last year. Printing and postage costs have recently increased to the extent that the £3 single membership fee no longer covers the cost of the Newsletter for a person living out of area. Membership fees have not increased for many years and the Trustees have recommended an increase to £5 and £9 respectively for single and family membership to ensure that costs continue to be covered.

Donations this year were made to Otterton Community Shop (£150) and to the Salem Chapel Trust (£250). The OVA also funded the cost of transport for local schoolchildren to visit the Pebblebed Heaths in a joint education project with the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust.

The end of year balance stands at £20449, which includes a reserve fund of £12000 held in an interest-bearing Virgin Charity Account

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

Trevor Waddington, Hon Treasurer