



Langdyke
Countryside Trust

LANGDYKE COUNTRYSIDE TRUST

**Registered as a Charity and Charitable Incorporated Organisation in England &
Wales No 1180626**

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 1 JANUARY to 31 DECEMBER 2020

1. Governance

Langdyke Countryside Trust CIO was registered as a Charitable Incorporate Organisation (CIO) (no 1180626) by the Charity Commission for England and Wales on 9th November 2018. The objectives of the CIO are to promote the conservation, protection and enhancement of the biodiversity, landscape, natural and cultural heritage of the rural areas of Peterborough, for the benefit of local people, visitors and the general public; and to advance the education of the public in the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment of the rural areas of Peterborough, and its historic and cultural aspects.

These objectives are achieved by the conservation, protection and improvement of the natural environment and heritage in Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and South Lincolnshire through restoring and managing the habitat and promoting biological diversity to enhance people's enjoyment and understanding of wildlife and their heritage.

Langdyke Countryside Trust CIO is governed by its Constitution approved and registered by the Charity Commission for England and Wales on 9 November 2018. The CIO is managed by its trustees supported by a Management Board. The number of trustees is set by the constitution and may be between four and twelve. Currently there are eleven trustees and a list of trustees are given below. Trustees are appointed by the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Other members of the Management Board are appointed by the Board of Trustees. There is no set time period for service on the Management Board. The Management Board is responsible for the day-to-day management of the trust, such as setting budgets, approving all trust management policies and procedures, approving the trust accounts, etc. All Trustees are full members of the Management Board. The Management Board is chaired by the Chair of Trustees.

In addition to the Management Board, there are two Programme Committees, Conservation and People and Communities. These Programme Committees report to the Management Board and have executive functions delegated to them under the trust's Scheme of Delegation. There are also four area groups made up of members from the particular geographic areas who manage the reserves and projects in their areas.

An AGM, open to all members of the trust, is held annually.

2. Board of Trustees. (all trustees served throughout the year unless stated otherwise)

Richard H Astle (Chair of Trustees)

David J. Alvey

Michael J. Clatworthy

Robert D. Cowcill

Christopher J. Gardiner

Michael P. Horne

Brian Lawrence (Honorary Treasurer)

Antony Mould (Appointed 22/07/2020)

Martin A. Parsons (Retired 30/04/2020)

Adam E Saunby (Appointed 30/07/2020)

Justin S Tilley (Appointed 30/07/2020)

Christopher. D. Topper.

3. Bankers

Metro Bank plc. 29 Long Causeway, Peterborough. PE1 1YJ

Barclays Bank plc. , Peterborough Business Centre, P.O. Box 294, Peterborough. PE1 1EZ

4. Independent Examiner of Accounts

Desmond Quinn BA ACMA., 30 Cherryfields, Ham Lane, Orton Waterville, Peterborough. PE2 5XD

5. Insurance Brokers

Erskine Murray, 1 Penman Way, Grove Park, Leicester. LE19 1SY

6 Annual Report of the Chair of the Trust.

Covid-19 dominated the charity's year. Our work parties and all outdoor events were cancelled in early March and social distancing restrictions disrupted our conservation work throughout the year.

Nevertheless, 2020 proved in many ways a successful year for the Trust, demonstrating our resilience as a charity in terms of our ability to adapt to circumstances and to transform the way we interact with our members. Our People and Communities Team rose to the challenge of lockdown and quickly organised and delivered a busy programme of on-line talks, conversations and activities, which provided many of our members with an important form of social interaction during a difficult time. During the first lockdown, we hosted fortnightly online conversations with leading national and local naturalists, artists and environmentalists and also an informal weekly drop-in chat on Zoom which was well attended and, judging by the feedback, greatly valued. The team also ran a busy Facebook programme, helping people to enjoy the nature in their gardens and what they could find on their daily exercise. A particular success was our "Three good things Thursday" campaign, asking members of our Facebook group to post three things from nature they had noticed every Thursday. We also ran online bird and flower identification sessions. Membership of our Facebook group doubled over the year.

Our work to help nature recover across the wider area of the John Clare Countryside also continued despite lockdown. During the first lockdown we used Zoom to bring together representatives of all the parish councils in the area and launched a campaign to develop nature recovery plans in each parish. All parishes have signed up to this campaign and completed first drafts of those plans during 2020. The delivery of those plans was, however, delayed by the reintroduction of restrictions in autumn 2020, and will be carried over to 2021. We also persuaded Peterborough City Council to endorse the John Clare Countryside vision unanimously at a meeting of the Full Council in July 2020. We have also continued to widen membership of the partnership and have developed important new relationships with the Welland Rivers Trust, Internal Drainage Board and Burghley Estates.

During the summer and early autumn, we were able to resume conservation work and took the opportunity to refresh the management plans for our reserves and to put in place a new framework for working with contractors to deliver the major tasks on each reserve. The richness of our reserves was amply reflected in the appearance of a new colony of the very scarce Man Orchid and of several new invertebrate species at Swaddywell Pit, including a wonderful Clifden Nonpareil moth in September. Vergette Wood Meadow too produced new sightings of key species such as four-spotted moth and marbled white butterfly.

7. Achievements against objectives set.

While we were unable to achieve all of our conservation objectives during the year, we succeed in our membership recruitment objectives. As set out above, we also continued to take forward our objectives for the John Clare Countryside, putting in place delivery plans for 2021.

8. Contributions made by volunteers.

All our activities are devised, organised and delivered by volunteers! The number of Langdyke members actively involved in the operation of the Trust has increased significantly over the year. When restrictions allowed, we had more members than ever attending the two weekly work parties and also new volunteers to help with events, publicity and other activities designed to engage our members. Many of the online activities described above were ideas of new members and there has been a welcome influx of younger members and families over this period. Overall, we have over 50 active volunteers in the Trust, a very high proportion of our 185 household memberships.

Of particular note was the work of students from Stamford Endowed Schools, over 100 of whom took part in a week of conservation days on our Etton Maxey Pits reserve as part of their Duke of Edinburgh programme. A great deal of willow was cut down and crassula removed and from the feedback, it seems that a lot of fun was had too.

9. Financial Review

As stated, above 2020 was greatly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic which delayed or deferred much of the work planned for the year. In spite of the Covid-19 pandemic work continued to increase the number of members which resulted in a 23.5% increase in membership subscriptions to £5,014.

The trust received a grant of £10,000 from Peterborough City Council which was related to the pandemic. The Management Board has decided to use this grant money to support nature recovery across the communities of the Langdyke area of operation. This money will support the installation of nest boxes and bug hotels, the creation of wildflower meadows and planting hedges and trees during 2021.

Government Rural Subsidies has fallen during the year because three of the receipts usual paid in December were not received and they are now anticipated to be received in the first three months of 2021.

Expenditure during the year fell because the Trust was unable to run working parties owing to Coronavirus restrictions and work planned on our reserves was delayed or deferred. Hopefully, we will be able to undertake this work during 2021 as the work is vital to ensure that our nature reserves are kept in good condition.

Because of the delay in undertaking work during 2020 the Trust's cash reserves increased by £5,922 to £45,374. Although a significant percentage of the Trust's income is received in December, in usual years, the Management Board consider this level of reserves to be excessive. Plans had been made to undertake significant works on the nature reserves to improve habitat and these works delayed from 2020 will hopefully go ahead in 2021 which will reduce the cash balances of the Trust.

Because a significant proportion of the income of the Trust arises through Government Rural Subsidies, the Management Board is developing a Medium-Term Strategy for the Trust which will include a Financial Plan. This plan will examine the effect of the Government's new Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) on the Trust's income streams.

Richard Astle
Chair of Trustees
4 May 2021

Brian Lawrence
Honorary Treasurer
4 May 2021