

# Railway Land Wildlife Trust Annual Report

1st November 2017 - 31st March 2018  
railwaylandproject.org



## Staffing

The Trust now employs a Programme Coordinator, **Helen Meade**, 4 days a week. In June 2017 **Ruth Collens** was recruited to the role of Admin Assistant, working 1 day a week, and in January 2018 **Milly Hawkins** joined the team as the Education Officer, working 2 days a week. Her post is funded by Chalk Cliff Trust, the Ernest Cook Trust and the Heritage Lottery Fund



## Our work with schools

The Trust's work with Lewes schools, the **468 project**, has continued to develop with Southover, Western Road, South Malling, Wallands, Kingston and Iford and St Pancras primary schools taking part in Year 4 visits.

Led by **Dr John Parry**, the project aims for pupils from the Lewes primary schools to visit the Linklater Pavilion and Railway Land in years 4 and 6, and then again in year 8 if they go on to Priory. This 'circular curriculum' enables them to revisit their learning from previous visits and deepen their environmental understanding.

As well as the Lewes primary schools, we have provided outdoor learning visits for school groups ranging from 20 pupils to 90, with visits taking place throughout the seasons. The appointment of **Milly Hawkins** as Education Officer has enabled us to work closely with schools and tailor the visits to their specific learning objectives. Visiting primary schools have included Telscombe Cliffs, Ringmer and Brackenbury.



Our work with Priory Secondary School continues and the support offered by Priory in the development of the 468 project has been invaluable in kick starting this innovative programme.

The Priory Forest School continues to use the Linklater Pavilion as a base for its Forest School sessions on the nature reserve and the pupils from Priory Film School have also been regular visitors.

The Trust was happy to support Activity Week in giving more pupils the chance to get stuck in with forest school activities.



## The Linklater RATS

**John Parry** continues to lead the RATS project with students from Ringmer and Priory School. Graphic Designer **Chris Smedley**, **Lawrence Quinn** from Priory and **Jo Higgs** from the Environment Agency have all shared their expertise and given time to support the RATS. This group replaced the Junior Management Board which involved children aged 8-14 from local primary schools for 20 years.



The second RATS group handed over in July 2017 to the new group saying, *'We found this experience very inspiring, and it educated us on what threats face us during floods. It has boosted our confidence with sharing our ideas as well.'*

## Our Partners

Developing partnerships with other organisations is essential in maximising our ability to reach new people and drive forward new projects. Collectively we are greater than the sum of our parts! Partners we have worked with include Wildflower Lewes, Plastic Free Lewes, Culture Shift, Biosphere, Lewes OctoberFeast, and Lewes Fossil festival.

## Get Creative – Get Into Nature Project

Our partnership with **Culture Shift CIC**, enabled us to carry on our work with Learning Disabled Adults, and we hope will lead to further projects with them. The five week course focuses on art and creativity that is inspired by the natural world, and is a combination of outdoor activity and indoor art sessions. The lead artist, **Anne Colvin** works with participants every week, with additional support and expertise provided by the Railway Land Wildlife Trust's staff and volunteers, as well as the Lewes District Council Community Ranger. It is fantastic that we have found a way to carry on providing high quality, inspirational opportunities for learning disabled adults and are hopeful that this will lead to further fruitful work and partnerships.

## 'Supporting mental health through connecting with nature'

**Sussex Community Foundation** have kindly given the Trust a grant to help run a pilot project for local people who are experiencing mental health problems. This is an area of work that the Trust is very keen to develop, both because the evidence of the benefits for mental well-being of being in nature is overwhelming, and because we have such excellent facilities in the Linklater to provide a safe, non-judgemental place for vulnerable people.





## Regular hirers

The Linklater Pavilion hosts many groups including U3A, Printmakers, AA, Angels, Rigpa, Rhythmix, CPRE Sussex, OVESCO, Community Energy South, SDNPA, Waytu, The Equalities Academy, Lewes Home School group, 3VA, ESCC, Patina, Plumpton College, Making Lewes, Chalk Rock, Cascade Recovery, Butterfly Conservation Trust, LOSRAS, St Michael's Church, and occasional private functions.

right: Sunday afternoon volunteer [Jan Pepler](#) and visitors



## Community Engagement Activities



**Our programme of events for adults and children** has grown to include family activity mornings as well as talks, walks, open afternoons and festivals. We have now established well attended half-term nature-based activity sessions for parents and children, **Signs of Spring**, and **Signs of Autumn**, sold out our **Dawn Chorus Walk** followed by breakfast in the Linklater (see left).

Our regular Sunday afternoon openings which included bird walks, floral walks and guided walks of the reserve drew an average of 25 visitors. We've decided that themed days work better, and **Bee Sunday**, **'Bats, Bees, Birds and Bugs'** and our **Annual Festival - Madagascar** continued to attract visitors and make best use of volunteer time.

Talks held on Sunday afternoons are popular, themes this year have included: Grey-lipped mullet, nature photography, What's a Green Funeral, Bats, Gideon Mantell, and the development of Vert woods

Local Pastel Artist [Tom Walker](#) and his students plus guest sculptor [Jenifer Shelley](#) and jeweller [Karen Wraith](#) rented the Linklater for Artwave. The fabulous array of work by local artists attracted over 625 visitors, who commented on the wide variety of styles, the range of media on offer, and the 'fantastic' atmosphere of the building, with its natural light, views of the river, and a new layout for the folding doors which made circulation easy.



## Membership Scheme Relaunch

The new scheme offers different types of membership, including individual, household, youth and unwaged categories. It also offers much more to members. As well as the usual updates and the chance to vote at the AGM, members will now receive significant discounts on the events, clubs and courses that we have planned for next year. On top of this there will be members-only events at the Linklater and the warm glow of knowing that you are supporting valuable local work in environmental education and social inclusion.



Membership is an important part of our future plans, not only in generating income but also in devising ways for the local community to play a more active role in the direction and activities of the Trust.

*right: Helen Meade and volunteer Jane McIntosh handing out membership welcome packs*

## HLF Project – Resilient Railway Land

This 18 month project got underway in February 2017 with an emphasis on underpinning the future of the Trust with a well developed long term strategy and business plan, the expertise to promote our work to new audiences and a strong volunteer programme. The project has been a valuable opportunity to reflect on the Trust's many strengths and opportunities, and to look ahead to how we can build on them further. Trustees, staff and volunteers are united in their desire to forge a clear and sustainable path for the Trust, despite the challenging economic climate.



## Volunteers

Volunteers continue to be the lifeblood of the Trust, offering support and expertise in an amazing variety of ways! From running events and festivals to devising activities, supporting school visits, helping to run projects and look after the Linklater, we literally couldn't function without them. The HLF Resilience Project has enabled us to develop our volunteer programme and offer training in site specific activities, first aid and working with school groups. During the 17 months from Nov 2016 – March 2018 69 people from all walks of life gave their time as volunteers. The Trust continues to recruit new volunteers all the time, matching their skills and interests to the roles and opportunities we can offer.



*top left: Angie Smith, our newest Trustee,  
centre: Barry McNulty,  
top right: Mark Sawtell, Treasurer,  
right: Jim Hillage Chair, and left: Simon Cooper.....*

*.....thankfully they're also all volunteering!*



**RAILWAY LAND WILDLIFE TRUST**  
**1st November 2017 - 31st March 2018**

[railwaylandproject.org](http://railwaylandproject.org)

 @RailwayLand

 **Railway Land Wildlife Trust**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**RAILWAY LAND WILDLIFE TRUST**  
**WEDNESDAY OCT 10TH**

**at 6pm**

**Agenda of the Annual General Meeting**

**Railway Land Wildlife Trust**

**Linklater Pavilion - Wed Oct 10th 6pm**

**AGENDA**

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 12th May 2017 at 7.30pm (enclosed)
3. Matters Arising
4. Annual Report and Accounts year ending 31st March 2018
5. Election of Members of the Management Committee.

Under our Articles of Association half the Members are required to retire each year and any Members joining since the last AGM are also obliged to retire. All are able to offer themselves for re-election.

Retiring this year and not standing for re-election are Jenifer Barton, Roger Beasley and Pat Rigg. Barry McNulty who was appointed after the last AGM is standing for election by the membership.

6. Appointment of Independent Examiner / Auditor
7. Any Other Business

**Please bring this publication to the meeting as it includes the Minutes of the last AGM, the Annual Report and Financial Statements**

**Minutes of the Railway Land Wildlife Trust Ltd – Annual General Meeting**

Held in the Linklater Pavilion. Friday, 12th May 2017 at 7.30pm

1. Apologies

Belinda Chapman, Simon Cooper, Mark Sawtell, David and Ruth Hutchinson, Caroline Kenwood, John Parry, Jean Heywood, Liz Penrose, Sam Smith, Chris Burgess, Richard Cave, Paul Biggs, Jean and Paul Aley, Jean Gould, Tessa George, Roger Beasley, Chris Ient, Jane McIntosh, David Hamilton. A letter from John Parry was read by Pat Rigg.

2. Review of previous AGM minutes: The minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

3. Matters Arising: None

4. Annual Report and Accounts

Pat Rigg explained the format of the report and the period it covers. She drew attention to the number and variety of events held and thanked all those who had been involved.

There had been a loss of support from ESCC for Nature Corridors. A period had been agreed for the RLWT to support this but that had now come to an end. A pilot programme was due to start in the autumn.

Railway Land Live; the use of webcam and live material going out to the general public were a great innovation.

Paul Biggs from Maxwell Gumbleton and Co had prepared the accounts using figures provided. Pat Rigg invited any questions or comments. The accounts were agreed and accepted.

5. Election of Members of the Management Committee



Retiring and offering their re-election were Pat Rigg and Sam Smith. Jenifer Barton proposed they should be accepted and Jan Osborne seconded.

Jim Hillage, Mark Sawtell and Simon Cooper were appointed as Trustees after the last AGM. This was proposed by Roger Beasley and seconded by Jan Osborne. New Trustees will continue to be sought.

#### 6. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Pat Rigg recommended that Paul Biggs from Maxwell Gumbleton should remain as the Independent Examiner. Jim Hillage proposed this and Jenifer Barton seconded the motion. A full audit may be deemed necessary. Pat Rigg handed over to Jim Hillage who has agreed to become Chair.

Jim Hillage and Helen Meade raised 'what we might do now and in the future'.

An informal discussion then followed involving all those present and Helen Meade noted suggestions. Education and social inclusion should continue to be the main drivers for the RLWT. There should be activities to raise funds and involve new members and families.

Jim Hillage gave an overview of what the RLWT is trying to do and how it intends to achieve its aims. This will be reported on at the 2018 AGM. Jim Hillage then thanked all those present and closed the meeting.

## **RAILWAY LAND WILDLIFE TRUST** **Annual Report 1st Nov 2017 – 31st March 2018**

The Trustees, who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act, submit their annual report and the independently examined financial statements for the period 1st of November 2016 to the 31st March 2018,. The Trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" issued in 2005 in preparing the annual report and financial statements for the charity.

### **Directors and Trustees**

The Directors of the charitable company (the Charity) are its Trustees for the purposes of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as Trustees.

The elected Trustees serving during the year and since the year end were as follows:-

Jenifer Barton, Roger Beasley, Belinda Chapman (resigned), Simon Cooper, Jim Hillage, Barry McNulty, Liz Penrose, Pat Rigg, Mark Sawtell, Angie Smith (co-opted), Sam Smith,

### **Independent Examiners**

Vicky Anderson, CLARK BROWNSCOMBE  
2, St Andrews Place  
Lewes  
BN7 1UP

### **Structure Governance and Management Governing Document**

The Railway Land Wildlife Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee under the Companies Act and is governed by a memorandum and articles of association dated 19 April 2013.

### **Recruitment and appointment of Trustees**

In accordance with the Articles of Association Trustees are elected by the Membership. Half of the Trustees are required to retire annually by rotation and may offer themselves for re-election. Any Trustees co-opted by the Trustee Board during the year are required to stand for re-election at the next Annual General Meeting (AGM). When considering co-opting, the Trustee Board has regard to the requirements for any specialist skills needed.

### **Organisation**

The Railway Land Wildlife Trust is governed by a Trustee Board which is responsible for setting policies and ensuring legality and good practice in accordance with the Articles of Association of the Trust, Companies Act 2006 and Charities Act 2011.

### **Risk Management**

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibility to manage risk and have a risk strategy in place which comprises the maintenance of a risk register

## Treasurer's Report on the Financial Accounts For the period ended 31st March 2018

During the period the Trustees decided to change the Trust's accounting date to the 31st March so that future accounting periods would match those of most of our likely funders to make it easier to provide them with any information they might require. Therefore the accounts cover a 17 month period from the 1st of November 2016 to the 31st March 2018, whereas the comparative figures are for the year ended 31st October 2016.

Copies of the independently examined statutory accounts will be available at the AGM and on our website at [www.railwaylandproject.org](http://www.railwaylandproject.org).

A Summarised Statement of Financial Activities for the period ended 31st March 2019 is shown below:

	Unrestricted Funds 2018 £	Restricted Funds 2018 £	Period to 31st March 2018 Total £	Year to 31st October 2016 £
<b>INCOME FROM</b>				
Donations and legacies	7,101	-	7,101	27,889
Charitable activities	21,719	47,656	69,375	53,803
Other trading activities	6,088	-	6,088	4,895
Investments	<u>11</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>5</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>34,919</u></b>	<b><u>47,656</u></b>	<b><u>82,575</u></b>	<b><u>86,592</u></b>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON</b>				
Raising funds	2,674	-	2,674	158
Charitable activities	<u>72,712</u>	<u>38,319</u>	<u>111,031</u>	<u>113,268</u>
	<u>75,386</u>	<u>38,319</u>	<u>113,705</u>	<u>113,426</u>
Net movement in funds	(40,467)	9,337	(31,130)	(26,834)
<b>Fund balances at 1st November 2016</b>	<b><u>749,691</u></b>	<b><u>4,004</u></b>	<b><u>753,695</u></b>	<b><u>780,529</u></b>
<b>Fund balances at 31st March 2018</b>	<b><u>709,224</u></b>	<b><u>13,341</u></b>	<b><u>722,565</u></b>	<b><u>753,695</u></b>

The Income from Charitable activities includes Grants received of £36,370 (2016 £38,107) and Income received for the hire of the Linklater Pavilion of £33,005.

The Unrestricted Net movement in funds of £(40,467) represents the shortfall of income to cover the day to day running costs of the Trust whereas the Restricted Net movement in Funds of £9,337 represents the amount of income received during the period for specific projects which had not been spent by the 31st March 2018.

The Balance of Unrestricted Funds at the 31st March 2018 of £709,224 (31st October 2016 £749,691) is invested in Fixed Assets of £666,785 and in Net Current assets of £42,439.

The Trustees have been developing a business plan, with the aid of consultants to address the shortfall of income and to put the finances of the Trust onto a sustainable basis. During the period the Trust received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the purpose of developing this plan and the trustees expect the commencement of the plan during 2018 to begin to produce benefits in the year to 31st March 2019.

The development of the business plan and the resulting increased activity has created considerable extra work for our coordinator, Helen Meade, and her team and I am very grateful to them for the way they have managed this extra workload and also to Helen for taking on additional accounting responsibilities.

Mark Sawtell  
Treasurer