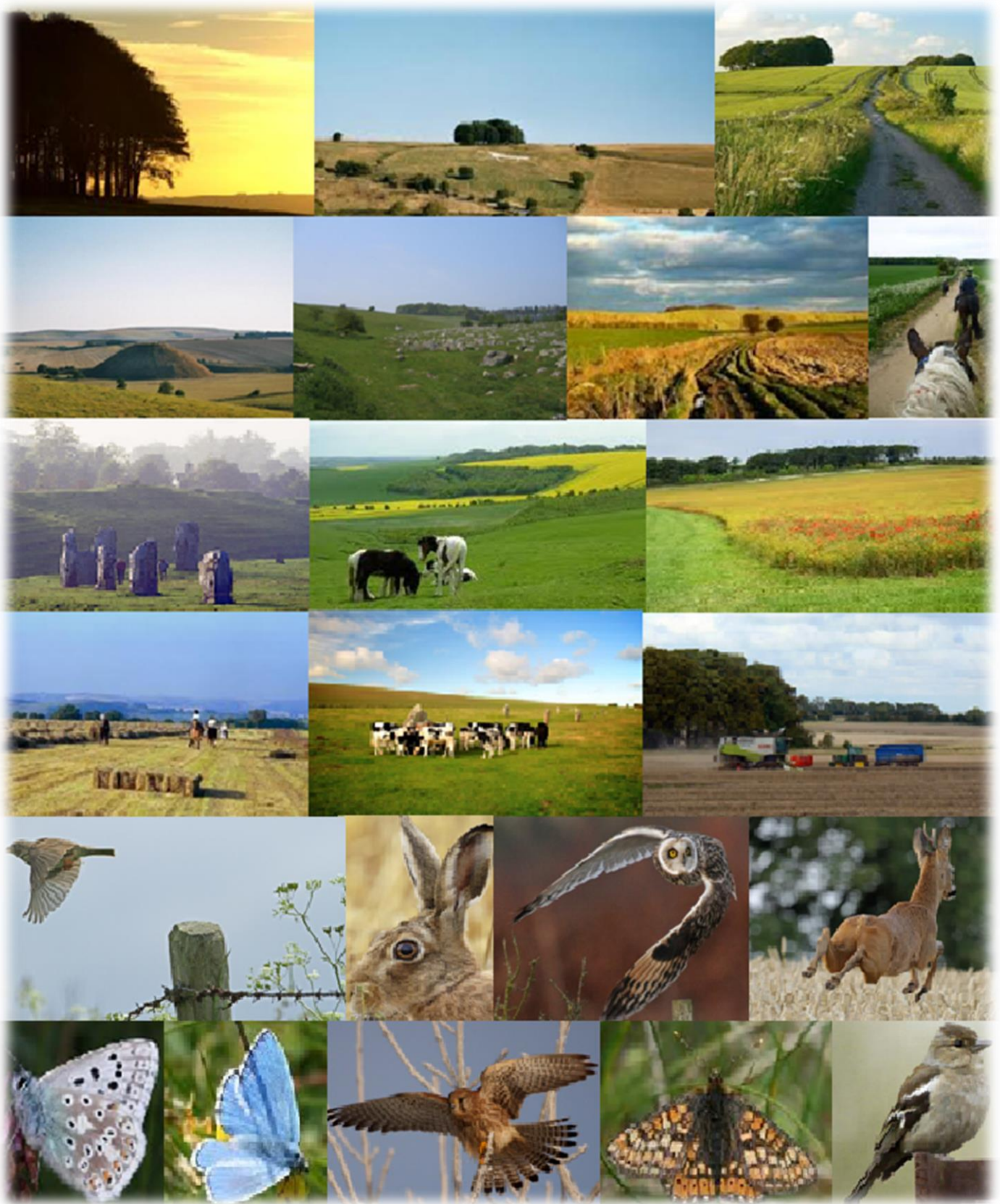
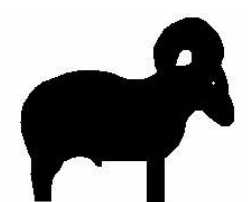


# The Marlborough Downs: Space for Nature



## Eighth Annual Report



Dr Jemma Batten  
Marlborough Downs Space for Nature Project Manager  
Black Sheep Countryside Management  
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**The Marlborough Downs**  
**Nature Enhancement Farming Ltd**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

Report and Unaudited Financial Statements  
for the year to 31st March 2020

Company Number : 7907437  
Registered Charity Number : 1147925

# **The Marlborough Downs Nature Enhancement Farming Ltd.**

(A company limited by guarantee)

The trustee board presents its directors' report and unaudited financial statements for year to 31 March 2020.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS**

Company Registered No : 7907437

Charity Registered No : 1147925

Principal Address: Jindabyne, Great Hinton, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 6BT

Registered address: Jindabyne, Great Hinton, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 6BT

Trustees that served during the period:

- Marcus Robert Cooper - Chair
- Robin Butler
- Gillian Carter
- Peter Lawson
- Matthew Moore
- Victoria Lowes (non-farming member representative)
- Christopher Musgrave (non-farming member representative)

Project Management: Black Sheep Countryside Management – Lead Dr Jemma Batten

### **Independent Examiner**

Helen Frost, HF Bookkeeping Plus, 48 Ashley Place, Ramsbury, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 2QB

### **Bank**

Barclays Bath Branch, 4-5 Southgate Street, Bath BA1 1AQ

# The Marlborough Downs Nature Enhancement Farming Ltd.

(A company limited by guarantee)

## REPORT OF THE TRUSTEE BOARD

### 1. Chairman's Introduction

Whatever goes on in the outside world to *Homo sapiens*, does not affect nature and our glorious countryside, its diversity and the acknowledgement of what the custodians of the land have created. Indeed Covid-19 has brought the countryside back into focus, particularly on our TV screens and within social media, giving ever wider coverage.

As a result we continue to widen of scope of what may be possible to achieve within our Project, and how we might assist and cajole, even influence, the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS). There are areas on the Downs that may well lend themselves to a wider habitat, inspired by the work at Knepp, and Charlie Burrell speaking to us at the Spring Celebration. This and the Autumn Seasonal Supper are inspirational in trading off ideas to enhance the Marlborough Downs.

To me the highlight of the year was the holding and hosting of the Farmer Group Forum in May 2019 – our pioneering work has inspired many such collaborative schemes (call them Clusters if you must!), so it was good to welcome some 50 other farmers representing 17 groups to showcase what we are evolving. We hope this type of Forum will take place elsewhere in the future and so develop a united front in Making Space for Nature.

The work on establishing our 'mini' showcase Reserve, thanks to Jilly Carter and the Kilgrogan Trust funding, is taking shape, even though delayed by either the wettest of winters or the driest of springs.

May I take this opportunity to thank those who have joined the Board this year, namely Jilly Carter and Percy Lawson, so giving us a wider vision, seeking further funding to look outside the box. This is being led by our redoubtable Project Manager, Jemma Batten, now brimming with ideas having returned from a shortened sabbatical with the Mount Kenya Trust.

Robert Cooper, East Farm

## **2. Structure, governance and management**

### **Governing Document**

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 12 January 2012 in preparation for the potential success of a bid application submitted to Natural England, which was then awarded on March 2012, and registered as a charity on 3 July 2012. The company was established as 'The Marlborough Downs NIA' under a standard Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £10. On 16th December 2015 the Charitable Company was renamed as 'The Marlborough Downs Nature Enhancement Farming'.

### **Organisational Structure**

The Marlborough Downs Nature Enhancement Farming charity has a board made up of farming and non-farming trustees and invited associates. Robert Cooper is the chair of the charity board. The board delegates operational activities to two delivery groups: the Downland Species Group and the Habitats and Heritage Group.

Projects are a collaboration between the farmers of the Marlborough Downs (who are members of the Marlborough Downs Nature Enhancement Farming charity) and two other organisations, Wiltshire Council and Black Sheep Countryside Management. The board meetings are therefore run as project board meetings and for this purposes representatives from partner organisations and non-farming members have been co-opted to the board. They are:

- Richard Broadhead, Rights of Way and Countryside Manager, Wiltshire Council
- Jemma Batten, Senior Consultant, Black Sheep Countryside Management

Other key stakeholders may be invited to attend board meetings from time to time. All strategic decisions are taken at these properly constituted project board meetings. All agenda items are supported by board papers, which include a risk analysis and clear recommendations to be discussed and considered. The decisions are then clearly minuted and these minutes with actions are circulated and made available to all members via the website.

### **Recruitment & Training**

This is the eighth year of the charity and this report covers the year ended 31st March 2020. The charity continues with the same overall aim as in previous years. The majority of trustees are currently or have previously been farmers and represent the farming community in the

Marlborough Downs area. Some have been on the board from the start of the charity and others have joined since. At the 2018 AGM it was agreed that non-farmer associate members should also be allowed to stand as trustees as long as the majority of the board remains as farmer members. Gillian (Jilly) Carter and Peter (Percy) Lawson were elected as new farmer trustees at the 2019 AGM, and Piers Maynard, who farms just off the Marlborough Downs, has attended meetings as a prospective trustee and will be proposed at the 2020 AGM.

The skills of the project board and their advisers are considered to meet the requirements of the charity's objectives and have been able to meet the ever increasing challenging project targets over the year. Trustees are offered training to fill any further gaps identified and if required additional trustees with new skills are recruited.

### **3. Financial Review**

The income during the year has been mainly from CS Facilitation Fund grant of £19,569 through Black Sheep, with £7,201 brought forward from the Community Foundation from the Science Museum Solar Park for the Bee Roadzz project, and £47,848 brought forward from the Kilcreggan Trust (Landscape).

The CS FF grant has been recognised in the accounts as a contribution in kind as the work undertaken was in support of the charity's main aims.

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Spend</b>	<b>Under/over-spend</b>
Community	£4,689.39	£3,893.54	£795.85
Landscape	£19,286.34	£21,031.76	-£1,744.92
Overheads	£5,912.31	£7,791.96	-£1,879.65
<b>Total</b>	<b>£29,888.54</b>	<b>£32,717.26</b>	<b>-£2,828.72</b>

### **Reserves Policy**

The policy on reserves is accepted as being minimal as offices are virtual and all work is undertaken by volunteers or contractors. However, a reserve of £5,000 for unforeseen events is considered adequate as this could cover half a year's management costs in an emergency plus one quarter's scheduled community activities. As of 31 March 2020 we had £6,412.31 unrestricted funds in reserve.

## **Donations In Kind**

In addition to the actual management of the budget, a significant amount is donated as 'in kind'. This year this was materially affected by the Space for Nature project managed by the charity's partner Black Sheep using a Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund grant won for a five-year period (to 30 September 2020). This significantly benefited the charity by meeting many of its aims through this partnership project managed by Black Sheep. There was also a range of contributions from donated staff time to support the project to donated items including seed, habitat management activities and free venue use. Additionally, volunteer time accounted for a high proportion of activities undertaken including project management time. However, the majority of this was not recorded due to the lack of paid support time.

## **4. Funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others**

The trustees act as custodians and ultimately the controlling group of the funds held. This was limited during the year as explained above. Otherwise, no funds are held on behalf of others.

## **5. Public benefit statement**

The Marlborough Downs Nature Enhancement Farmers Ltd and Charity aims to deliver a more biodiverse, more attractive and more accessible landscape. Alongside these obvious, tangible benefits come a suite of gains that may be more difficult to quantify but are known collectively as ecosystem services. Such gains include improved water quality due to reduced agricultural inputs; a contribution towards the physical and mental health of residents and visitors through access to green spaces and fresh air; mitigation against climate change through building robust ecological networks; better crop pollination; support for a strong rural economy via agriculture, tourism and recreation; and the social, cultural and educational benefits that are a result of interaction with nature.

The partnership is driven by the fact that despite decades of conservation effort, many of our habitats and species are at best stable and at worst in decline and while most of the farmers in the area have long been involved in environmental schemes, we have shown that the farmer-led, bottom-up approach of this initiative can lead to far greater and more wide-reaching benefits as a result of the 'ownership' conferred on us by this project. We are also convinced that the potential for the long term delivery of this project is far higher than for others that rely upon financial incentives rather than personal commitment. We understand that a landscape-scale approach cannot succeed without widespread farmer involvement



and we ensured that all farmers in the area had the opportunity to contribute to the development of the project.

As well as environmental and conservation benefits there is an emphasis on education of the public through volunteer activities to support the project as well as direct educational activities provided by the project. These activities are community based and work with existing groups so also promote community working and cohesion as groups and individuals are brought together with a common aim. We are working with students and local communities to encourage more involvement in the countryside and to promote greater awareness of landscape, wildlife and farming. We are keen to enthuse people about the countryside and get the non-farming community involved with activities on and about the Downs through events and activities, workshops and work parties. We are working to provide better public access and information to encourage people to enjoy and understand the landscape while improving their health and wellbeing.

We have seen that the relationships developed during the initial pilot project, both within the partnership and with external agencies and organisations, have continued, and the shared commitment to improving the nature of the Marlborough Downs is having a long-lasting impact upon the area.

## **6. Objectives and activities**

The objectives as laid out for the Company in the initial incorporation document were:

- To promote for the benefit of the public the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment.
- To advance the education of the public in the conservation, protection and improvement of the environment.
- To promote sustainable development for the benefit of the public by the preservation, conservation and the protection of the environment and the prudent use of resources.
- The promotion of sustainable means of achieving economic growth and regeneration.

## 7. Achievements and performance Year 8 (April 2019 to March 2020)

### **OBJECTIVE 1 – To deliver evidence-based conservation activities on a landscape scale**

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#### **1.1 Biodiversity tailoring**

Detailed knowledge of what's happening beyond individual farm boundaries has enabled us to deliver on a landscape scale.

##### **1.1.1 Existing Stewardship agreements**

The project management team continues to support members in their delivery of individual Environmental Stewardship (ES) and Countryside Stewardship (CS) agreements. At the beginning of 2019, these covered around 60% of the 10,290 hectares farmed by members.

In 2019 we undertook to review the HLS prescriptions for grassland management for harriers and short-eared owls which is being carried out by five of our members. We had hoped to discuss this on site with our Natural England adviser but unfortunately due to the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 this was not possible.



##### **1.1.2 New Stewardship agreements**

Two mid tier applications were supported in 2019. One was a very comprehensive scheme which included management for farmland birds (overwinter stubbles, bird seed plots, unharvested headlands, winter feeding); hedge management; grassland management and herbal leys; water quality (buffer and in-field strips, cover crops, arable reversion to unfertilised grassland, capital works). The second application covered water quality capital works only as the farm is already covered by an HLS agreement.

Both applications were successful and agreements started on 1 January 2020.

### 1.1.3 Dissemination of best practice

The facilitator continues to use a variety of media to disseminate best practice, including:

- Monthly updates (May, June, July, August, September, October x 2, November, December, January, February, March). April's update was missed due to the facilitator being busy doing BPS and Stewardship claims.
- 6th annual Spring Celebration (April 2019, 48 attended):
  - Project update – Jemma Batten
  - Rewilding – Charlie Burrell, Knepp Estate
  - Hedgehog survey – Simon Smart, Pewsey Downs Farmer Group
  - Wildlife Champion Award (Vicki Lowes)
- 7th annual Seasonal Supper (October 2019, 39 attended):
  - Project update and future – Jemma Batten
  - Farmland Birds – Matt Prior, Wiltshire Ornithological Society
  - Operation Turtle Dove – Nichole Khan, RSPB Kent
- Initiation of a collaborative project with the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology on regenerative landscapes and farming – the ASSIST programme.
- Engagement with Defra in the development of the proposed Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme expected to replace existing environmental and direct payments.
- Our website – [www.spacefornature.net](http://www.spacefornature.net) – and social media accounts



In addition, the project director/facilitator carried out 24 farm visits during which the project, its aims, delivery and/or achievements were the subject of at least part of the conversation.

Other 'best practice' activities associated with particular habitats and/or species are detailed under the relevant Objective headings below.

### 1.1.4 Space for Nature Reserve

Work on the Reserve was severely curtailed due to the abnormally hot, dry summer of 2019 and the abnormally long, wet winter of 2019-20. However, reprofiling of the open central area

of the site to facilitate the establishment of a wildflower meadow (yet to be sown) is now complete, a pond has been established, and the entire site fenced and a hedge planted on two sides (see 2.2.2). This work was funded through a grant received from the Kilcreggan Trust.



In September, we held a Farm Walk on Maisey Farm (attended by 20 people), which focused on the Reserve and the plans we have for the site.

### 1.1.5 Farmer Group Forum

Now that the concept of farmers working together to deliver conservation activities at a landscape scale is well-established and there are over 100 groups following in our footsteps with collaborative projects, the Marlborough Downs group decided that they would like to organise a forum to encourage groups to share their experiences, both good and bad. In May 2019, 50 farmers and advisers from 17 groups around the country came together on Temple Farm to learn about what we have achieved since we got together back in 2011, and to inspire us and one another with their own stories of collaborative effort. The event was a great success with very positive feedback, and it is hoped that another group will host in 2020.





## 1.2 Supporting local conservation businesses

We continue to have excellent relationships with many local businesses and other organisations involved in farming, conservation, land management, and other countryside activities, and communicate and collaborate on an *ad hoc* basis. For example, we were instrumental in engaging a landowner member and a grazier to enable a potential wilding project through a Farm Business Tenancy.

## OBJECTIVE 2 – To enable appropriate management of semi-natural wildlife habitat

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### 2.1 Better woodland management

#### 2.1.1 Restoration of beech clumps

Beech clumps are characteristic landscape features of the Marlborough Downs and provide habitat for woodland species. Planted in Victorian times, many on archaeological features such as barrows, our iconic clumps are starting to show their age and are in need of



supplementary planting if they are to survive the death of the original trees. We secured a grant of £1300 from the North Wessex Downs AONB Sustainable Development Fund for trees, tubes and stakes to plant around three beech clumps on Weir Farm, alongside the Ridgeway National Trail. Because the established trees would shade out new planting within clumps, the idea is that if we plant a ring around

existing clumps, when the old trees die the centre can be replanted within the maturing outer ring, which will in turn be replaced when necessary, and so on *ad infinitum*. In this way, there will always be a clump, whether it be a solid stand of trees or a ring – the visual impact will be the same, and the habitat will be sustained.

#### 2.1.2 Summer Farm Walk

This year's Summer Farm Walk (attended by 48 people) was through SSSI woodland on the Burderop Estate and focused on management to conserve veteran trees, promote a diverse structural and ecological habitat, and support woodland species, particularly birds.

The event was led by the Burderop Estate Manager and Matt Prior of Wiltshire Ornithological Society, and finished with a sunset picnic enjoyed by all.





## 2.2 Wildlife corridors and stepping stones

### 2.2.1 Tree sparrow corridor

The North Wessex Downs AONB Sustainable Development Fund also gave us a grant of £2065 to purchase plants, spiral guards and canes to establish 680 m of tree sparrow corridor on Manor Farm, Berwick Bassett and around the Space for Nature Reserve at Maisey Farm. Tree sparrow corridors are essentially extra-wide, densely planted hedges made up of a bespoke mix of species designed to provide cover and attract insects (chick food). Manor Farm's breeding tree sparrow population has grown from a handful of pairs to one of the biggest flocks in the area and possibly the country, largely due to the efforts we have put in to provide nest boxes, habitat and year-round food for these very special birds.





### 2.2.2 Wilding the Downs

Following a Spring Celebration talk by Charlie Burrell (who is the brother of one of our members) on rewilding the Knepp Estate, and a visit to Knepp Wildland in the summer, some members of the group are keen to explore the potential for wilding the Downs. While we don't have the luxury of 3,500 contiguous acres with which to experiment, we do believe that if we can create a patchwork of wilderness areas across our 25,000 acres we could have a significant impact on the density and diversity of wildlife on the Downs.



*Visit to Knepp Wildland, June 2019*

Unfortunately, like so many other projects, planning for this was put on hold due to Covid-19, but we hope to start putting some of our ideas into action in 2021.

### 2.3 Better water management

A small group visited Action for the River Kennet's Stonebridge Wild River Reserve in Marlborough to find out more about our local river, and we had planned a visit to the Eastridge Estate, which is directly to the east of Marlborough near Hungerford, to find out about the work that has been done there to enhance the River Kennet and adjacent water meadows. Unfortunately, this had to be postponed due to torrential rain on the day.



*Stonebridge Wild River Reserve*



## **OBJECTIVE 3 – To consolidate populations of species of national and local importance**

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### **3.1 Space for Birds: Marlborough Downs farmland bird project**

Matt Prior continues to co-ordinate our three-pronged approach to farmland bird conservation:

1. Year-round feeding opportunities for adults and spring/summer insect food for chicks
2. Nesting habitat
3. Protection from predators where predation significantly threatens breeding success

#### **3.1.1 Feeding and foraging habitat**

Most of our members continue to provide overwinter stubbles, sown wild bird mixes and/or nectar mix plots via existing ELS or HLS agreements, and/or do so on a voluntary basis.

Members are also encouraged to double drill a strip about 100 m from the edge of a spring-sown crop to provide nesting habitat for corn buntings, and to provide song posts for calling males in the form of wooden plant canes. Because of the disastrous weather during autumn drilling, spring sowing this year was a pretty intense period and so no-one remembered to do any double drilling this year.



#### **3.1.2 Supplementary feeding**

Members continue to feed over 20 tonnes of seed annually to our farmland birds over winter, and sunflowers have again been planted to provide more seed.

#### **3.1.3 Farmland bird events**

In November 2019, a farm walk focusing on birds was held and as well as learning about the various species seen, members and other guests were invited to contribute to the purchase of a thermal imaging camera which will allow us to 'see' birds and other animals at night. This will help us to understand how wildlife moves around the landscape for food and shelter at night, and enable us to make better decisions about land management. With this event and a public fundraising campaign we managed to raise over £1,000 towards the cost of a camera. The remainder was contributed by Wiltshire Ornithological Society and the North Wessex

Downs AONB, and we look forward to enjoying nocturnal forays across the Downs once Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

Unfortunately, due to bad weather, our annual Dawn Chorus Walk was cancelled this year, and a planned event led by Tim Norris of the Hampshire Swift Group also had to be postponed because of Covid-19.

### **3.1.4 Visit to Southern hen harrier reintroduction project**

In early March, just before lockdown, four members visited the hen harrier reintroduction site at Natural England's Cherry Lodge Farm where we learnt about the programme and the various crops that have been planted to provide foraging habitat for the birds once they are released.

## **3.2 Widespread species**

### **3.2.1 Edible plants**

We held another foraging workshop in April, when farmers and friends joined Fred the Forager from The Wild Side of Life to find out about the wide range of edible plants found on our farms. As well as learning how to identify lots of species, we prepared a delicious lunch of wild mushrooms in a sauce made with other plants we'd collected.



### **3.2.2 Butterflies and Bats**

Our annual Butterfly Walk, led by a member of Wiltshire Butterfly Conservation, and Bat Walk around the National Trust village at Avebury were both well attended.

### **3.2.3 ASSIST visit**

A visit to see CEH ASSIST trial plots on the Hendred Estate was postponed due to Covid-19.

**OBJECTIVE 4 – To offer a range of opportunities for people to engage with the landscape of the Marlborough Downs**

**OBJECTIVE 5 – To provide high quality access for all**

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#### **4.1 Marlborough Downs SfN events**

Over the course of the year we organised a range of meetings, events, talks, walks, workshops, visits and multi-media material to promote best practice amongst our members, to inform the public about our work, and to educate everyone on wildlife, countryside and farming subjects. Some of these have already been mentioned, but in total we co-ordinated over 40 events, activities and publications, including:

<b>April</b>	4	Spring Celebration (3 speakers, Wildlife Champion award)
	11	Spring foraging with Fred
	17	Avebury Bat Walk
	27	Dawn Chorus Walk (cancelled due to bad weather)
	28	Avebury Plant Sale
<b>May</b>	2	Visit to Stonebridge Wild River Reserve
	21	Farmer Group Forum
	27	May newsletter
<b>June</b>	20	Visit to Knepp Wildland
	22	Farm walk with Transition Marlborough permaculture group
	28	June newsletter



<b>July</b>	18	Summer farm walk and picnic on the Burderop Estate
	26	July newsletter
	29	Butterfly walk
<b>August</b>	26	August newsletter
	31	Avebury bat walk
<b>September</b>	12	Wilding the Downs – planning meeting
	12	Evening farm walk and picnic at Maisey Farm
	18	Talk to Mid Bucks Beekeepers' Association
	28	September newsletter

<b>October</b>	3	Next steps for agri-environment – workshop with Natural England on proposals for a new Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme
	17	Seasonal Supper (3 speakers)
	21	Talk to Chippenham Rotary Club
	22	White Horse Grooming – volunteer event to tidy up chalk figure
	31	October newsletter
<b>November</b>	2	October newsletter update
	23	Farmland bird walk
	24	November newsletter
	26	CEH talk on the ASSIST programme
	29	Planting campaign – volunteer event to plant up beech clump and tree sparrow corridor
<b>December</b>	6	Christmas willow wreath workshop
	17	Festive Pop(u)lar Deer – making wooden reindeer
	30	December newsletter



<b>January</b>	28	Visit to Eastridge Estate River Kennet restoration (cancelled due to bad weather)
	31	January newsletter
<b>February</b>	10	Talk to NFU SW Uplands Conference
	26	February newsletter
<b>March</b>	2	Visit to hen harrier reintroduction project
	6	Talk to Dartmoor farmers
	22	March newsletter
	31	S.O.S. – Save our Swifts (cancelled due to Covid-19)

## 4.2 Volunteer Group

This year we held two volunteer event, the first to clear vegetation and debris from one of our white horse chalk figures, and the second a weekend campaign to plant trees around three beech clumps (see 2.1.1) and establish a new tree sparrow corridor (see 2.2.1). While we only needed a small team for “White Horse Grooming”, over 40 volunteers helped out on the weekend planting campaign, including venture scouts and staff and clients from the Richmond Fellowship, which supports people with mental health issues.

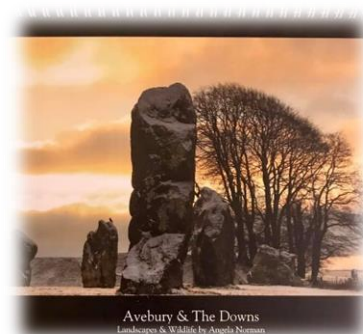


## OBJECTIVE 6 – To increase local and national awareness of the work, achievements and impact of the Space for Nature Project

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We continue to take every opportunity to promote the project, our work, and the link between food, farming, landscape and wildlife. During the year to 31 March, this included:

- Networking – everyone involved promotes the project in whatever context possible and to a wide audience including politicians, civil servants, local and national NGOs, charities and other organisations, businesses, the media, special interest groups, other farmer groups, etc.
- Partnership working – we continue to work closely with a wide range of stakeholders including Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire Trust for Ornithology, Transition Marlborough, Action for the River Kennet, and various other local community and youth groups.
- Media engagement – we have good relationships with local media outlets such as BBC Radio Wiltshire and Marlborough News Online, and appreciate the support we get in promoting the project and our community events.
- Events programme – our public events are well attended showing that we are engaging with our target audience.
- Membership – as of 31 March 2020 we had 60 members (farmers and other land managers) representing 31 holdings covering just under 10,200 hectares (25,200 acres) of the Marlborough Downs.
- Local supporters – we are lucky enough to have lots of support from the local community who help raise funds for the project. For example, Avebury Wassailers raise money for us every year, a group of druids donated £250 after an All Hallows event, and one of our supporters produced a calendar featuring beautiful photographs of the Downs, which raised another £250. We are extremely grateful for this and other support we receive from people who live and work on the Downs.
- Online – we post regular website – [www.spacefornature.net](http://www.spacefornature.net) – and social media updates. We have over 1800 followers on facebook, 330 on Instagram, and 150 on twitter.



## **8. Progress Planned for future Years**

The Countryside Stewardship (CS) Facilitation Fund grant has covered project management time and overheads associated with supporting the delivery of CS priorities, which focus on landscape and biodiversity (habitats and species) objectives. Our five year grant period is due to end on 30 September 2020, though there is a possibility that it may be extended due to the enforced hiatus in activity due to Covid-19.

Whether or not the grant period is extended we intend to start looking for funding to support both our landscape and biodiversity work and our community and outreach programme. To this end, we propose to undertake a member survey early in the year 2020-21 and review our project aims and objectives in order to inform future funding bids.

We will continue to engage with Natural England and Defra in the development of the new Environmental Land Management Scheme. We are, via our project management team, engaged in an ELM trial to identify the best ways in which farmer groups can be supported by the new scheme in identifying spatial priorities for landscape scale projects.

In the coming year we will continue to provide workshops, activities and information to enable farmer members to deliver project objectives, for example:

- Monthly email updates
- Workshops on downland species such as wildflowers, birds, butterflies, bats, small mammals
- Workshops on habitat management such as grassland restoration, woodland management, pond management
- Workshops on environmental best practice such as soil management, water quality and pollution control

We will also actively seek to work with other farmer groups on a national scale by, for example, inviting members of local groups to our workshops and events, and by visiting other groups in different parts of the country to find out about their activities.

As has been mentioned, we also have ambitions for Wilding the Downs and to continue developing our Space for Nature Reserve.



## Board Statement

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (issued March 2005). In preparing this report, the Trustees have taken advantage of the small companies exemptions provided by section 419 (2) of the Companies Act 2006.

It was approved by the trustee board on \_\_\_\_\_.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

M. Robert Cooper

Chair

Date: 14 November 2020.

# **Independent Examiner's report to the Trustees of The Marlborough Downs Nature Enhancement Farming Ltd**

(A Company limited by guarantee)

I report on the accounts of the company for the year ended 31st March 2020, which are set out on the following pages.

## **Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under part 16 of the 2006 Act and that an independent examination is needed.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities 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 Commission. 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 the seeking of 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, no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

## **Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records are not kept in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; or
- the accounts do not accord with such records; or
- the accounts do not comply with relevant accounting requirements under section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 other than any requirement that the accounts give a "true and fair" view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (Statement of Recommended Practice), FRS102.



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 proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: H. Frost

Helen Frost  
HF Bookkeeping Plus  
48 Ashley Piece  
Ramsbury  
Marlborough  
Wiltshire SN8 2QE

Date: 17/11/2020.

## ANNEX 1: Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund Grant Detail

		Expenditure				Total for year	Under/ overspend
		AMJ	JAS	OND	JFM		
Facilitation fees	<b>Project delivery:</b> delivering advice and facilitating action - farm visits; biodiversity tailoring; review and amendments to agreements; facilitation of collaborative effort between neighbours; arranging/leading workshops and best practice activities	3330.00	2857.50	4010.63	1957.50	12155.63	-1309.05
	<b>Project management and development:</b> Record-keeping; mapping activities; reporting; new members; outreach & promotion; sourcing additional funding for complementary projects; developing stakeholder relationships; supporting partner activity; organising meetings; consultation, liaison, planning, strategic development	753.75	1574.25	731.25	337.50	3396.75	
	<b>Admin support:</b> Work required to support group activities	213.75	299.82	11.25	213.75	738.57	
Travel	<b>Expenses:</b> travel and subsistence	220.95	233.05	175.95	167.67	797.62	97.62
Meeting expenses	<b>Meetings:</b> Board support; accommodation; other meeting expenses	74.12	67.50	348.50	56.66	546.78	-913.22
Workshops	<b>Training events:</b> fees for training providers; venue costs; materials; expenses	353.51	36.00	459.84	0.00	849.35	-1250.65
Educational access (from 10/17)	<b>Schools:</b> Establish links; activities for inset days; farm and classroom events; virtual learning hub; pollinator activity for Open Farm Sunday. <i><b>NB We are still waiting for NE approval for this amendment to our Facilitation Plan</b></i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Evaluation	<b>Partnership working:</b> evaluation of progress and mechanisms, feedback to improve provision	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-1000.00
Other	Collaboration / engagement / funding	242.06	46.86	0.00	129.00	417.92	-722.08
Total Facilitation Fund claim		5188.14	5114.98	5737.42	2862.08	18902.62	-5097.38
Additional in-kind/pro bono contributions		2173.50	258.75	491.20	0.00	2923.45	
<b>Total</b>		<b>7361.64</b>	<b>5373.73</b>	<b>6228.62</b>	<b>2862.08</b>	<b>21826.07</b>	

## ANNEX 2: Balance Sheet at 31 March 2020

### ASSETS

#### Current Assets

##### Cash at bank and in hand

Paypal	591.98
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Petty Cash	111.92
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##### Barclays bank current

Kilcreggan Trust	41,964.14
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Barclays bank current - Other	5,708.41
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Total Barclays bank current	<u>47,672.55</u>
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Total Cash at bank and in hand	<u>48,376.45</u>
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Total Current Assets	48,376.45
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NET CURRENT ASSETS	<u>48,376.45</u>
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TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>48,376.45</u>
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NET ASSETS	<u><u>48,376.45</u></u>
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#### Capital and Reserves

Net Assets	51,205.17
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Profit for the Year	-2,828.72
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Shareholder funds	<u><u>48,376.45</u></u>
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## ANNEX 3: Profit and Loss 1 April 19 to 31 March 20

### Ordinary Income/Expense

#### Income

CS Facilitation Fund	18,902.62
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Fund Raising	2,515.89
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Gifts and Donations Income	
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<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>858.58</b>
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Total Gifts and Donations Income	858.58
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Gifts In Kind	
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Pro bono	4,246.45
----------	----------

Total Gifts In Kind	4,246.45
---------------------	----------

Grants	3,365.00
--------	----------

<b>Total Income</b>	<b>29,888.54</b>
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<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>29,888.54</b>
---------------------	------------------

#### Expense

Fundraising	801.49
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Project Expenses	
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Travel and subsistence	
------------------------	--

Travel	80.80
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Total Travel and subsistence	80.80
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Office Expense	
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Postage and Delivery	11.87
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Stationery	2.60
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Total Office Expense	14.47
----------------------	-------

Total Project Expenses	95.27
------------------------	-------

Bank Charge	59.85
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Communication	
---------------	--

Community Events	
------------------	--

Admin support	20.63
---------------	-------

Community Events - Other	835.00
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Total Community Events	855.63
------------------------	--------

Promotion	
Online	20.00
Printed	69.89
Total Promotion	<u>89.89</u>
Best practice workshops	
Farmer forum	2,353.00
Best practice workshops - Other	50.00
Total Best practice workshops	<u>2,403.00</u>
Total Communication	3,348.52
Professional Fees	
Report writing	216.00
Accountancy	600.00
Board support	729.00
Bookkeeping	505.50
Insurance Expense	242.06
Total Professional Fees	<u>2,292.56</u>
Project Costs	
Grassland management	720.00
Donated items and services	21,826.07
Materials	3,365.00
Farmland Birds	
Feeding stations	
Bird feed	50.00
Total Feeding stations	<u>50.00</u>
Farmland Birds - Other	158.50
Total Farmland Birds	<u>208.50</u>
Total Project Costs	<u>26,119.57</u>
Total Expense	<u>32,717.26</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>-2,828.72</u>
Profit for the Year	<u><u>-2,828.72</u></u>

## ANNEX 4: Profit and Loss detail

	Community	Landscape				Overheads	
	Community Involvement	Farmer Group Forum	Best Practice	Downland Species	Habitat	Mangt / Overhead	TOTAL
Ordinary Income/Expense							
Income							
CS Facilitation Fund	0.00	0.00	13,551.76	0.00	0.00	5,350.86	18,902.62
Fund Raising	907.36	707.08	140.00	200.00	0.00	561.45	2,515.89
Gifts and Donations Income							
Unrestricted	858.58	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	858.58
Total Gifts and Donations Income	858.58	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	858.58
Gifts In Kind							
Pro bono	2,923.45	1,323.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,246.45
Total Gifts In Kind	2,923.45	1,323.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,246.45
Grants	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,365.00	0.00	3,365.00
Total Income	4,689.39	2,030.08	13,691.76	200.00	3,365.00	5,912.31	29,888.54
Gross Profit	4,689.39	2,030.08	13,691.76	200.00	3,365.00	5,912.31	29,888.54
Expense							
Fundraising	0.00	0.00	0.00	652.99	0.00	148.50	801.49
Project Expenses							
Travel and subsistence							
Travel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	80.80	80.80
Total Travel and subsistence	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	80.80	80.80

	Community	Landscape				Overheads	
	Community Involvement	Farmer Group Forum	Best Practice	Downland Species	Habitat	Mangt / Overhead	TOTAL
Office Expense							
Postage and Delivery	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	11.87	11.87
Stationery	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.60	2.60
Total Office Expense	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	14.47	14.47
Total Project Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	95.27	95.27
Bank Charge	24.57	18.21	0.00	4.30	0.00	12.77	59.85
Communication							
Community Events							
Admin support	20.63	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	20.63
Community Events - Other	835.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	835.00
Total Community Events	855.63	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	855.63
Promotion							
Online	20.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	20.00
Printed	69.89	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	69.89
Total Promotion	89.89	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	89.89
Best practice workshops							
Farmer forum	0.00	2,353.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,353.00
Best practice workshops - Other	0.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00
Total Best practice workshops	0.00	2,353.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,403.00

	Community	Landscape				Overheads	
	Community Involvement	Farmer Group Forum	Best Practice	Downland Species	Habitat	Mangt / Overhead	TOTAL
Total Communication	945.52	2,353.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,348.52
Professional Fees							
Report writing	0.00	0.00	108.00	0.00	0.00	108.00	216.00
Accountancy	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	600.00	600.00
Board support	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	729.00	729.00
Bookkeeping	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	505.50	505.50
Insurance Expense	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	242.06	242.06
Total Professional Fees	0.00	0.00	108.00	0.00	0.00	2,184.56	2,292.56
Project Costs							
Grassland management	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	720.00	0.00	720.00
Donated items and services	2,923.45	0.00	13,551.76	0.00	0.00	5,350.86	21,826.07
Materials	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,365.00	0.00	3,365.00
Farmland Birds							
Feeding stations							
Bird feed	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	50.00
Total Feeding stations	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	50.00
Farmland Birds - Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	158.50	0.00	0.00	158.50
Total Farmland Birds	0.00	0.00	0.00	208.50	0.00	0.00	208.50
Total Project Costs	2,923.45	0.00	13,551.76	208.50	4,085.00	5,350.86	26,119.57



	Community	Landscape				Overheads	
	Community Involvement	Farmer Group Forum	Best Practice	Downland Species	Habitat	Mangt / Overhead	TOTAL
Total Expense	3,893.54	2,371.21	13,709.76	865.79	4,085.00	7,791.96	32,717.26
Net Ordinary Income	795.85	-341.13	-18.00	-665.79	-720.00	-1,879.65	-2,828.72
Profit for the Year	795.85	-341.13	-18.00	-665.79	-720.00	-1,879.65	-2,828.72

Notes:

- 1 Public donations and fundraising income allocated to Community Involvement; member donations and fundraising income allocated to Mangt./Overheads
- 2 Bank charges - Paypal/Just Giving/Stripe (credit card) transaction handling fees
- 3 Best Practice Fundraising - payment from non-members for Knepp trip
- 4 **Best Practice workshops - Other - donation to Gillian Fallon for fuel to Knepp**
- 5 Downland Species Fundraising - thermal imaging camera
- 6 Downland Species Farmland Birds - Other - mist nets
- 7 Habitat grants / materials - AONB Sustainable Development Fund for tree sparrow corridor and clump
- 8 Habitat grassland management - cut and take at the SfN Reserve