Annual Report 2025



Biodiversity & Environmental Education Society

Report of the trustees for the year ending 31 December 2025

Contents

Letter from the Chair 4
Our ethos 5
1 Reference and administrative details 6
2 Structure, governance and management 6
3 Objectives and activities in the year 7
4 Financial review 10
5 BEES in numbers in 2024 12
6 Looking forward 13

Biodiversity & Environmental Education Society

Biodiversity and Environmental Education Society (BEES)
Registered charity in England and Wales - no. 1187828 10
Redshank Close, Haverhill CB9 0PB, Suffolk, UK
www.beeanatureguide.org.uk

Letter from the Chair

As I look back on the past year, I want to be entirely transparent: it has been a uniquely challenging period for our charity.

Due to a critical lack of funding to adequately pay a member of staff and a shortfall in volunteer support—combined with a time when all of our trustees faced intensive personal commitments—we had to make the difficult decision to temporarily pause our charitable activities. One of our valued trustees also had to step down for personal reasons. She was exceptional at what she did, greatly appreciated by both the teachers and the participants on our first course, and her departure is a significant loss to us all.
We send her our warmest wishes and deepest thanks for her dedication.



Compounding our challenges, our planned headquarters relocation took nine months in total to complete. The protracted move delayed our timeline for researching new volunteers and rescheduling our nature guide course programme.

While stepping back was difficult, this move has successfully positioned us closer to our activity sites and made us more accessible for the future as we are now based in Fornham All Saints, very close to Bury St Edmunds and Lackford Lakes.

More than anything, however, this past year has reminded us of the strength of our community. I want to express my deepest gratitude to everyone who still believes in us and what we do. A special thank you to those of you who continue to register your interest on our website – you were 114 at the end of 2025 – and follow our journey, even during periods when we have been quiet on social media. Your steadfast patience and enduring support mean the world to us, and you give us great hope as we look toward rebuilding and returning to our work.

On behalf of the charity, I want to extend a huge thank you too to our teachers, volunteers, and trustees. Your commitment and expertise have been fundamental to this incredible project. Together, we have built the foundation for a greener future. Thank you for making BEES a success.

Anneloes Martinsen

Our Ethos

Our Vision

Our vision is for all people to live in harmony with, and with respect to, all natural environments and the life forms which inhabit them.

We want a world where people are curious about nature and are able to enjoy it, where people are excited to obtain new knowledge, and where all have the opportunity to develop skills to better safeguard nature regardless of circumstance or background.

Our Values

Accessibility

Our course is accessible to all members of the public over the age of 18 regardless of background. Existing knowledge or experience is not necessary, only enthusiasm, interest in the natural world and the willingness to learn. We provide a course programme that is financially accessible.

Sustainability

We manage our resources effectively and efficiently whilst delivering value to the public. We are a charity that is socially, ethically and environmentally responsible. We value creativity and diversity.

Quality

We provide a high-quality learning experience based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence and information. We welcome feedback and continuously endeavour to improve the content of our programme and maintain a high educational standard.

Network and Partnership

We promote trust and bring people and communities together to create a strong network of nature guides and ambassadors for nature. We endeavour to cultivate partnerships and connect with other charities, organisations, community groups, and individuals involved in, and promoting, wildlife and environmental protection, education, and public interest to create an integrated and multidisciplinary network in line with our mission and vision.

Passion

We are all passionate about nature and are committed to inspiring others to share our passion.

Our Mission

To educate the public about all aspects of nature, to raise nature awareness and environmental issues, to give them tools to better protect our natural heritage.

BEES

1 Reference and administrative details

Biodiversity and Environmental Education Society (BEES) is a registered charity in England and Wales (registration number: 1187828) since 7th February 2020. It is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), whose only voting members are its charity trustees – 'Foundation' model constitution.

Address: 10 Redshank Close, Haverhill CB9 0PB, Suffolk, UK

Trustee names at the end of 2025:

- Anneloes Martinsen, PhD (Chair)
- Lee Norman Fletcher, PhD
- David Cammaerts, MSc
- Sam Rogers, who was appointed for a two-year term in the course of 2024

Website: https://www.beeanatureguide.org.uk

Email: contact@beeanatureguide.org.uk

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/BEE.a.nature.guide



Anneloes Martinsen



Lee Fletcher



David Cammaerts



Sam Rogers

2 Structure, governance, and management

The CIO's governing document was first approved on 7th February 2020 and last amended on 2nd October 2020.

Since October 2025, BEES is governed by four passionate and dedicated trustees. Trustees are selected based on affinity, skills and experience, and passion for our cause. The chair holds a long-term friendship with one of the other trustees sharing the same passion and desire to create a network of nature guides throughout the UK. The relationship between trustees and volunteers within the organisation is genuine, friendly, and positive.

Because the charity is still in its infancy, day-to-day administration, financial planning and reporting are done by the trustees and working meetings are organised where required to keep track of progress and tasks to perform and deliver our objectives. Decisions during trustees' meetings are made by the quorum (per our governing document, the quorum is two charity trustees, or the number nearest to one third of the total number of charity trustees, whichever is greater, or such larger number as the charity trustees may decide from time to time).

3 Objectives and activities in the year

Biodiversity and Environmental Education Society (BEES) is a small charity aiming to grow national awareness and knowledge of nature and environmental issues through adult education: training and supporting all who love and are interested in nature to become skilled nature guides and go on to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with their friends, families, colleagues, and communities.

The objective of BEES is: "For the public benefit, to advance the education of the public in all the aspects of nature and environmental protection" (BEES Governing document).

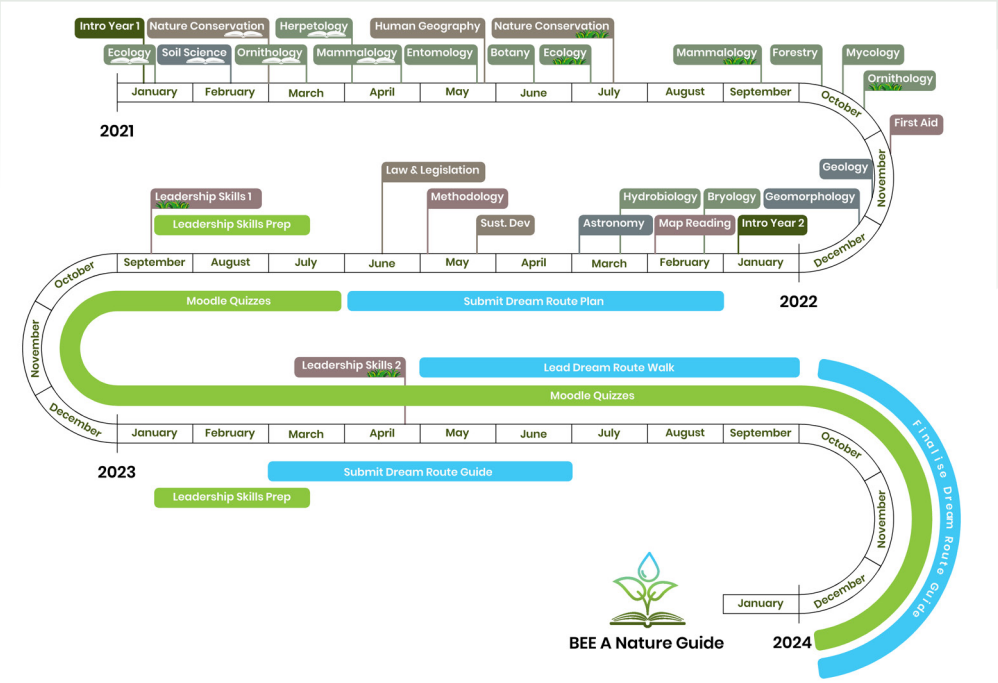
To do so, we have developed the first low-cost nature guide training course programme in the UK, starting in Suffolk and Norfolk.

The course programme runs over 3 years:

- a first year and a half of theory and practical courses covering in breadth and depth the many facets of the Natural Sciences — from Ecology to Astronomy, Mycology to Earth Sciences, and practical skills in leadership, nature guide methodology, first aid, and navigation (see all of our subjects on the following page)
- a second and third year to practice the participant's newfound knowledge to foster confidence and leadership skills to lead their own guided walks

Further details about the course programme are available on our website https://www.beeanatureguide.org.uk/the-course.

We provide a combination of **online theory** and **outdoor practical sessions**, led by our team of talented teachers, all recruited based on their skills and experience in their relevant fields — these span various backgrounds including academics and researchers, school teachers, naturalist society leaders, professionals, and other community experts.



We have developed an **online learning platform** using Moodle, a well-known educational course management system (CMS). Our Moodle learning environment is designed not only for online teaching sessions but also for self-training, including continuous access to session recordings, digital recreations of our written handbooks and other learning material, for interacting with participants and teachers through our BEEHive forum, and with the ultimate objective to develop a network of ambassadors for nature. During 2022 and 2023, we worked on the creation of quizzes for each of our course topics for our participants to test their knowledge and skills, and made them available for most of our subjects.

BEE A Nature Guide - Subjects



BEES

During our outdoor activities, we visit various natural sites across the East of England — these may for example be sites looked after by the Wildlife Trusts, RSPB or Country Parks. Each outdoor session offers the opportunity for participants to learn more about the topics covered during the theoretical stages of learning and for our teachers to illustrate those theoretical concepts with observations made in natural environments.

A third major component of our course is to provide our participants with a **handbook for each subject**. The handbooks are written and edited by our trustees and volunteers, with help from the Cercles des Naturalistes de Belgique and our expert teachers. We design and publish a printed book for each participant, hand curated by our charity trustees and volunteers and printed using an eco-printer to limit our footprint. We also digitally transform the handbooks so they can be also accessible online through our Moodle learning environment.

We believe that financial circumstance should not be a barrier to environmental education and try to ensure the course is kept as financially accessible as possible. As such, the fee to enrol on the course (£320 in 2021), does not cover the full operating costs of running the programme. The charity relies on fundraising and donations to make up the remainder. No additional charity funds are made from running the course and the fee offers substantial value for money given its breadth and depth, and combination of theoretical and practical training. Our vision is for the course to be able to be delivered free to those of financial hardship so anybody, regardless of their socioeconomic circumstances, may learn.

We also share knowledge with members of the public by providing articles on some relevant topics about nature on our website and facebook pages so that everyone can be informed.

Over the reporting period, the charity encountered significant operational and capacity challenges that necessitated a temporary pause in our primary charitable activities. A combination of a critical shortfall in volunteer support and insufficient funding to pay a member of staff severely constrained our operational output. Additionally, our remaining trustees experienced exceptional personal commitments, limiting the time they could dedicate to the management and governance of the organisation. Furthermore, the charity experienced a notable loss with the departure of one of our trustees for personal reasons; her contributions had been highly valued by both the teachers and participants on the course. During this period, plans were initiated to relocate our headquarters closer to the key nature reserves we visit and where our charitable activities take place. Although the new property is owned by our Chair and not directly purchased by the charity, the acquisition process experienced unforeseen delays, taking nine months in total to complete. This extended delay subsequently pushed back our planned timelines for recruiting new volunteers and rescheduling our flagship course programme for training nature guides.

Statement by the charity trustees:

At the end of 2025, the charity did not meet its objectives and complied with its duty to have due regard to guidance on public benefit as published by the Charity Commission.

The charity enjoys collaborative links with fellow charitable organisations, the British Naturalist's Association and Cercles des Naturalistes de Belgique.

BRITISH NATURALIST'S ASSOCIATION
Founded 1905

CNB
Cercles des Naturalistes de Belgique

Although new to the UK, our training model has been successfully pioneered by our partners in Belgium, the Cercles des Naturalistes de Belgique (CNB) registered charity in Belgium. They have trained about 10,000 ambassadors for nature since 1975. We are excited to bring this training method to the UK and help to develop and support a growing community of nature guides. Our course programme also receives the recommendation and support of the British Naturalist's Association (BNA), a registered charity in the UK since 1905. They are the national body for naturalists in the UK and have instituted graded membership to formally recognise specific levels of knowledge and achievement in the field of natural history to those who study and gain field skills both professionally and recreationally.

4 Financial Review

At the beginning of 2025, we had £6,879 as open balance, income earned mainly from donations from a Charitable Trust, a private donor, and members of the public. The charity earned £275 during 2025 thanks to donations from members of the public (see our BEES Receipts and Payments Accounts 2025).

100% of donations received go towards the operating costs of the course, including to help pay for the following:

- Production of course handbooks - these are designed, printed and bound in-house in order to keep costs, and our carbon footprint, as low as possible
- Cost of visiting wildlife sites - many of our outdoor practical sessions take place on land managed by other great organisations such as the Wildlife Trusts or RSPB. Making use of these fantastic sites for our course usually involves paying a fee or making a donation to those organisations
- Paying subject-expert teachers for their time holding lectures and teaching walks
- Cost of organising our graduation ceremony
- Equipment costs - to ensure participants get the most out of our sessions we purchase additional resources, such as identification guides, pond dipping/surveying equipment, digital microscopes, binoculars and hand lenses

We used £570 to pay for our general administration and governance costs (insurance, professional services, office costs, and the operating costs of our website).

At the end of 2025, we had £6,584 left on our bank account and PayPal account combined. We are holding £1,000 as designated funds (for ongoing website server fees, insurance and professional services) and classed by us not as reserve funds. We have a Reserve Policy in place stating that no funds should be held in reserve until all costs relating to present charity activity (i.e. relating to the current course cohort) are paid. The charity is currently in its infancy and therefore has very little funds to go towards a reserve.
The chair and trustees will prioritise raising funds in 2026 through private donations, grants or exploring other revenue streams.

BEES Receipts and payments accounts 2025

For the Period from:	1/1/2025	To:	31/12/2025

Receipts	Amount (to nearest £)	Payments	Amount (to nearest £)
Opening balance	£6,879		
Donations from members of the public	£242	General administration/governance costs	
Advertising and marketing - refund	£33	Insurance	£180
		Professional services	£144
		Website operating costs	£246
Total:	**£7,154**	**Total:**	**£570**

Closing balance: £6,584

Notes:

Our open balance (£6,879) slightly differs from closing balance from 2024 (£6,876) due to rounding up and down figures.

BEES in numbers in 2025

Running our **1st** nature guide training course in the UK

We operate our course programme in **2** counties – Suffolk and Norfolk

The charity is run by **4** passionate and dedicated trustees

114 members of the public registered their interest in the BEE a Nature Guide course since we launched our first training programme

By the end of 2025 we had **540** followers on facebook

At the end of 2025, we had **£6,584** in our bank account to deliver our charitable activities

6 Looking forward

Our main goal for the moment is to settle and establish the course programme in Suffolk and Norfolk. However, we have long-term aims to expand and cover the whole of the UK. We will work towards developing partnerships and collaborations with other organisations and individuals to create a pool of teachers, venues, and volunteers in other counties necessary to establish and make the course programme accessible to members of the public in other regions of the UK.

Short-term objectives for 2026 are mainly to review our course programme, recruit volunteers and look at expanding our fundraising strategy to make the course programme for a second cohort a success from start to finish. Specifically, in 2026, we will be working on the following priorities:

- Relocating our headquaters to be closer to our course programme's key sites and more accessible for volunteers.
- Reviewing and improving the course programme based on feedback from participants and teachers.
- Recruiting skilled volunteers to help the charity develop and meet its long- and short-term objectives. This also includes developing a proper volunteer management policy and selection process.
- Working on developing our social visibility and fundraising strategy.
- Starting a second cohort of participants.

The interest in our BEE a Nature Guide Course programme is still growing. Since we launched our first training programme (and after the closing date of our first course programme), 114 members of the public have registered their interest in our next course programme, all waiting for further instructions regarding the opening of a second cohort. It shows the necessity and importance of having an accessible course programme about biodiversity and natural history, especially in these times of climate change and urgency of protecting our natural heritage for us and future generations.



Shimpling Park Farm, Suffolk, July 2024. Photo: BEES.

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Receipts and Payments Accounts

For the Period from:	01/01/2025	To:	31/12/2025

Receipts	Amount *(to nearest £)*	Payments	Amount *(to nearest £)*
Opening balance	£6,879	General administration/governance costs	
Donations from members of the public	£242	Insurance	£180
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