

The Otter Trust

Trustee Report and Accounts

For year ended 31st December 2025

Charity No: 263103

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ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Reference and administrative details for the charity, its trustees and advisors for the year ending 31st December 2025

Trustees:	Roger Walsh (chairman) Ben Potterton Thomas Proctor
Registered Charity Number:	263103
Registered Address:	Earsham Wetland Centre Old Harleston Road Earsham Norfolk NR35 2AF
Independent Examiner:	C B Accounts Ltd Harvest Cottage Airfield Road Fersfield IP22 2FF

Cover Photo: Wetland Habitat created and owned by The Otter Trust at Dickleburgh Moor Nature Reserve

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements for the charitable trust for the 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2025.

The financial statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis in accordance with section 133 of the Charities Act 2011 and comply with the charities governing document.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Trust reviews its aims and objectives on an annual basis and the Trustees have decided to make no changes during this reporting year. The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when reviewing the Trust's aims and objectives, in planning future activities and setting the grant-making policy for the year.

The main object of the Trust is advancing the education of the public in conservation of the natural environment, with an emphasis on research and scientific study, particularly of otters.

The main activity of the Trust is to manage, conserve and preserve the wildlife characteristics of wetland habitat for otters and other wetland species, in an environmentally friendly and sustainable way.

GRANT-MAKING POLICIES

The Trust has established its grant making policy to achieve its objects for the public benefit. The Trust invites applications for research grants from institutions and individuals specialising in conservation.

An initial submission is requested from potential applicants, which is then reviewed. If the project fits with the charity's objectives a full business plan and financial information needs to be provided. The Trustees then consider all funding requests and may request further information if they consider it necessary.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

2025 has been a year of planning and consolidation across our projects and sites, with significant accomplishments across our species recovery projects and infrastructure.

Our focus has been on the future and the long-term sustainability of the charity. Unlike our counterparts, we don't actively fundraise from the general public and concentrate on projects with clear objectives and goals. Our priority for the next 24 months is to work with partners to improve our educational, conservation and research facilities at our Earsham Wetland Centre and to safeguard the heritage within our Dickleburgh Moor Nature Reserve.

The Otter Trust has provided logistical support to otter conservation and research projects worldwide. Throughout the year we have provided historical otter research data to students in Africa, North America, Southeast Asia and Europe.

Within the UK, our volunteers have completed habitat and abundance surveys across several river districts. We have collated and reported otter sightings and road casualties, via regional and county recorders. In addition, we have responded to reports of injured and orphaned otters, working with reputable rehabilitators to ensure that the otters welfare and ultimately, its reintroduction to its natural and regional environment are ethical and within recommended guidelines.



Above: Otter photographed by Paul Mayhew at our Dickleburgh Moor Nature Reserve

Photograph © Paul Mayhew

Our volunteers and Trustees have represented us a numerous events and meetings throughout the year, including the Broads Biodiversity Partnership, Broads Catchment Partnership, Waveney Catchment Partnership, Local Nature Recovery Delivery Groups, Natural England Focus Groups, IUCN Species Survival Commission & Specialist Groups.

At our **Dickleburgh Moor Nature Reserve**, volunteers have helped us plant 30,000 saplings, forming new hedges around our fields and permissive paths. Our partnership with The Tree Council and National Highways, enabled us to source biodegradable tree guards and a wider range of saplings than we could grow in our own community tree nursery.

We have created new livestock paddocks along the eastern and northern boundary of our site, enabling us to create flower meadows to act as a buffer between our reserve and neighbouring farmland. These paddocks will provide seasonal grazing for our Red Poll Cattle, Norfolk Horn Sheep and Suffolk Horses, helping us to sustainably and organically manage our site.



Above: Part of 3,750m of new hedging and fencing at Dickleburgh Moor



Above: Hubbard. Our colt foal born 6th April 2025

In the Spring we welcomed another Suffolk foal, the colt foal was named Hubbard, in memory of Raymond Hubbard, a renowned horseman and resident of Dickleburgh. We also enabled Aidan Jolly to visit Suffolk Horse breeders in the US and learn management techniques, as part of our commitment to this traditional horse breed and with support from the donation that we received from the estate of Peter Hinsley in 2024.

Our team has maintained 1.5 miles of permissive and public footpaths, to enable people to easily access the reserve, we have also made significant improvements to the public footpaths, creating a compacted and level surface along its entire route.

Willow pollards are a landscape feature of the Moor and we would like to thank Daniel Meadows and his team for restoring several of our veteran trees and removing non-native poplar trees from the site. This also enabled us to erect an additional Barn Owl box, a Kestrel box and a large number of tit and bat boxes onto suitable trees.



Above: One of the dozens of boxes that have been erected this year.

Our monthly free guided walks were well attended throughout the year, and in addition we provided some bird ringing demonstrations in partnership with the Waveney Bird Club.



Above: Early Bronze Age axe head. Discovered at Dickleburgh Moor

In the Spring, our volunteers, supported by our Archaeological Group, excavated some ghost ponds in the southern section of the site and discovered animal remains and a bronze axe head from the late Bronze Age period. The Archaeological Group made a variety of discoveries throughout the year, and we would like to thank Norfolk County Council, Norwich Museum and Historic England for supporting our team and providing technical support as required.



Above: Aerial photo of Dickleburgh Moor

The **Earsham Wetland Centre** site remains closed to the general public but is still a hub for our conservation activities and is used widely by our partner organisations. Our Community Tree Nursery has been growing a wide range of native plants, to use for habitat improvements on our sites, with Black Poplar trees being the primary focus. As part of our conservation work with riverine trees, we have been donating surplus trees to likeminded groups and individuals across Norfolk, Suffolk & Essex.



Above: Ben Potterton helping the Beccles U3A Group plant Black Poplar trees in Suffolk



In partnership with the Suffolk Tree Wardens, Forest Research, Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service and the National Landscapes team, we received a Farming in Protected Landscapes Grant that enabled us to complete surveys of native Black Poplar Trees in East & South Suffolk.

We have also updated our records for Black Poplar Trees in Norfolk and have discovered several trees, that are genetically significant to the UK population. The tree group is now working with partners including the Wellcome Sanger Institute, National Trust and University of Udine (Italy) on a whole genome sequencing project.





Alongside the tree nursery, our volunteers have been conducting a trial of Milk-parsley (Thyselium palustre) and have completed a Species Recovery Project for the Suffolk Lungwort (Pulmonaria obscura). The Lungwort project increased the population of this endangered plant from three UK populations in the River Waveney Catchment, to dozens of new satellite populations in north Suffolk. Our thanks go to Natural England who has funded these projects and supported our team throughout the year.

Pictures – Top Left: Frankie Turner & David Appleton represented us at the Suffolk Show, talking to landowners about river catchment management and tree conservation across the region.
Bottom Left: Roger Walsh & Aidan Jolly planting Pulmonaria obscura at the end of the Species Recovery Project.
Bottom Right: Milk-parsley growing in our tunnels at Earsham



The wetland bird group conducted various projects throughout the year, the collaboration between Waveney Bird Club, Waveney Ringing group and the British Trust for Ornithology has enabled us to combine the use of volunteers and equipment to continue colony surveys of Black-headed Gull, Little Egret and Grey Heron. We would also like to thank the Earsham Estate, Flixton Estate and Breedon Group plc for support with this work.

Above: Roger Walsh and members of the Waveney Ringing Group catching Black-headed Gull chicks at Flixton.

Our team has supported a wide range of events and educational activities throughout the year, hosting a diverse mix of groups of all ages and abilities to our sites.

With the support of Frankie Turner, we were able to offer an ecology week for students studying biology at a sixth form in Norwich (pictured right)



As part of our community support, our volunteers help to maintain neighbouring land, including St Clements Common and Langmere Green on behalf of Dickleburgh & Rushall Parish Council, with aim of creating green habitat corridors.

We'd like to thank all of our neighbours and supporters at both our Dickleburgh Moor and Earsham sites, for all the help we receive throughout the year.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the Charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements. Further details regarding the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in note 2, to the financial statements.

RESERVES POLICY

A reserves policy exists to sufficiently maintain the two Otter Trust properties for a sufficient period. The Trustees continually review their ongoing reserves policy to ensure it is adequate for the Charity's current financial situation.

There are no concerns about the charity's ability to continue to operate, and all funds of the Trust are unrestricted at the year end.

FIINANCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT POLICIES

The Trustees continue to review the major risks to which the Charity is exposed. The Trustees will establish systems to mitigate any risks not already covered by the charity's existing systems and risk management strategies and controls.

The main risk to the charity remains damage to land/property at Earsham and Dickleburgh. The Trustees continue to review insurance cover to make sure it is at an adequate level to protect the Charity's assets.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

The Otter Trust is a registered charity, number 263103. The Trust was originally established by a trust deed which was registered with the Charity Commission on 26 October 1971. The Trust is governed by the scheme dated 2003 which replaces the original trust deed, and the scheme was amended in 2004 and 2006.

APPOINTMENT AND ELECTION OF TRUSTEES

The management of the charity is the responsibility of the Trustees who are elected and co-opted under the terms of the scheme.

All trustees are issued with the Charity Commission booklet setting out the duties and responsibilities of trustees. New trustees also receive the latest financial statements and management accounts, and other briefing documentation explaining the organisational structure and practices and are invited to attend the offices.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the law applicable to charities in England and Wales.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the governing document. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by and signed on behalf of the board of Trustees by:



Roger Walsh - Chairman of Trustees

Date: 23/09/2026

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	Note	Unrestricted Funds 2025	Total Funds 2025	*Total Funds 2024*
Receipts		**£**	**£**	*£*
Donations & Legacies		**22,500**	**22,500**	*46,813*
Grant Income	3	**27,445**	**27,445**	*62,814*
Interest		**97**	**97**	*527*
Other Income		**30**	**30**	*6,740*
Sale of Assets		**12,250**	**12,250**	*940*
Total Receipts		**62,322**	**62,322**	*117,834*
Payments				
Direct Project Costs		**30,180**	**30,180**	*39,433*
Salaries and Pension		**5,504**	**5,504**	*51,544*
Animal Upkeep & Welfare		**16,023**	**16,023**	*16,315*
Support Costs		**27,115**	**27,115**	*35,683*
Repairs and Maintenance		**1,386**	**1,386**	*2,115*
Purchase of Assets		**-**	**-**	*10,744*
Total Payments		**80,208**	**80,208**	*155,834*
Net Movement in Funds		**(17,886)**	**(17,886)**	*(38,000)*
Reconciliation of funds:				
Total Funds Brought Forward		**31,857**	**31,857**	*69,857*
Net Movement of funds		**(17,886)**	**(17,886)**	*(38,000)*
Total Funds Carried Forward		**13,971**	**13,971**	*31,857*

STATEMENT OF ASSETS

	Note	2025 £	*2024* *£*
Current Assets			
Cash at bank and in hand		**13,971**	*31,857*
Livestock	4	**51,440**	*60,917*
		65,411	*92,774*
Current Liabilities			
Creditors due within one year		**(29,325)**	*(37,501)*
Net current assets		**36,086**	*55,273*
Fixed Assets	5		
Land & Buildings		**711,549**	*543,143*
Fixtures & Fittings		**14,350**	*8,826*
Plant, Machinery & Vehicles		**28,306**	*40,556*
Equipment		**6,517**	*6,517*
		760,722	*599,042*
Total Net Assets		**796,808**	*654,315*



Roger Walsh - Chairman of Trustees

Date: 23/09/2026

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1) Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis in accordance with section 133 of the Charities Act 2011

2) Going concern

The trustees have reviewed the level of cash and investments held at the year end and considered the level of anticipated expenditure. Based on this, they have a reasonable expectation that the charity can meet its liabilities as they fall due and have therefore prepared the accounts on a going concern basis.

3) Grant Income Breakdown

The charity has received grant income from the following institutions this year

	Total Funds 2025
Farming in Protected Landscapes	18,278
Natural England Species Recovery Program	9,167
	27,445

4) Livestock

Livestock is included in the accounts as a current asset. Its main purpose is to further the charities objectives and only occasionally is sold

5) Fixed Assets

The charity holds a considerable amount in fixed assets and therefore the trustees felt they should be included in the accounts.

The trustees have considered the asset's purchase price and current market value when arriving at their valuations.

The figures for 2024 were prepared on an accruals basis and included depreciation.

NOTES CONT...

6) Related Party Transactions

Thomas Proctor provided emergency repair and maintenance works at the charities Earsham site, as a contractor, during the financial year. These works were paid in 3 transactions and totaled £826.52.

The charity sold some of its trailers to a company of which Ben Potterton is a Director, which totaled £12,250. The trailers were valued at fair market value and this amount was paid in full.

The Trustees followed the charities Conflict of Interest and Financial policy when entering into both of these transactions.

There were no other contracts or transactions, other than those mentioned above, that a trustee or person related to the charity, had a personal interest in.

No Trustee claimed any trustee expenses during the year.

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Otter Trust

Charity number 263103 — accounts for the year ended 31 December 2025

I report to the Charity Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31st December 2025 comprising the receipts and payments account and statement of assets and liabilities.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act. In carrying out my examination I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that, in any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or

- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Dated: 29/09/2026

Claire Butler MAAT – C B Accounts Ltd Harvest Cottage Airfield Road Fersfield IP22 2FF