

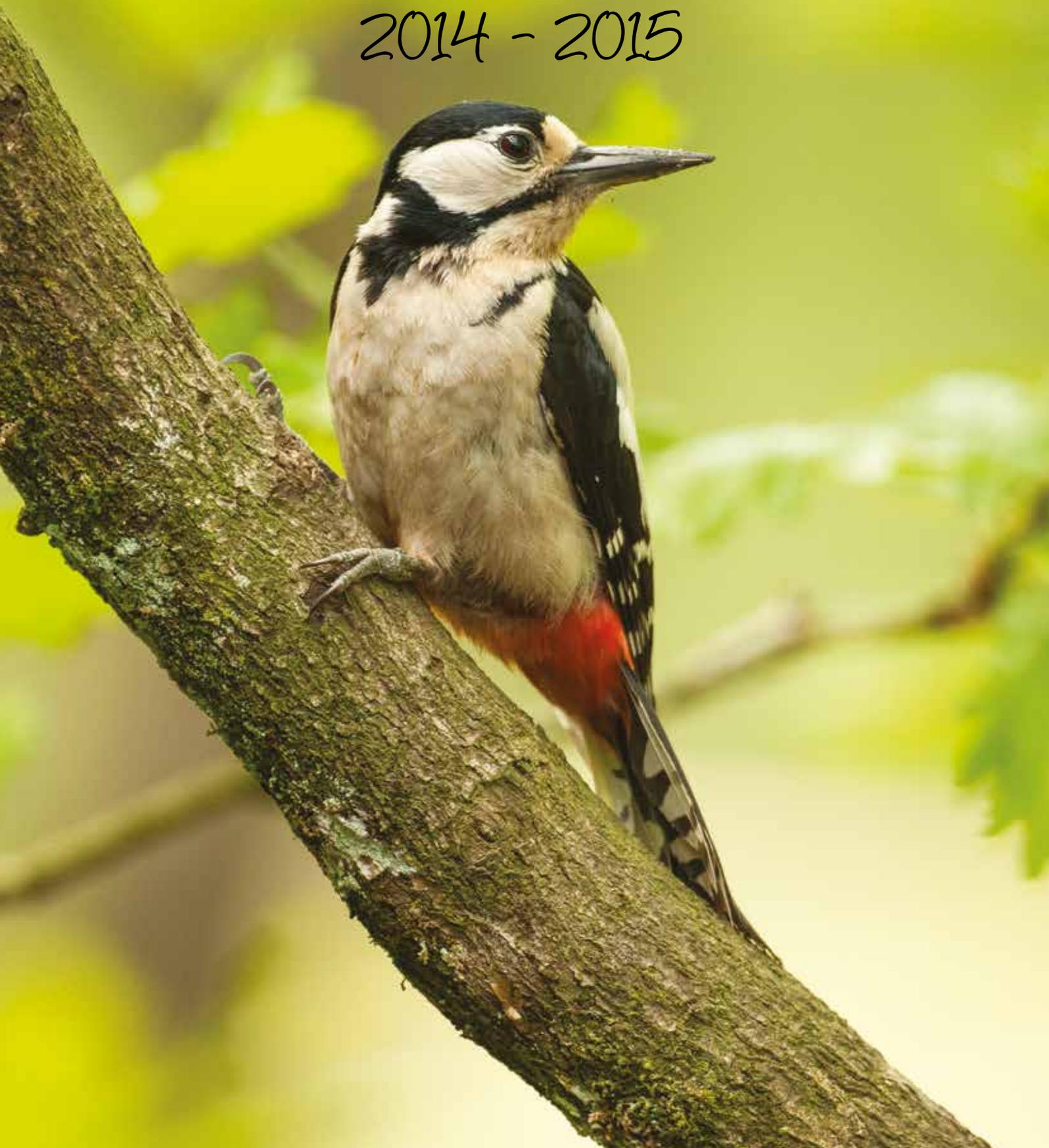


Lincolnshire

Wildlife Trust

Annual Review

2014 - 2015





This kingfisher photographed by Don Davis is one of the rapidly growing number of wildlife images taken in Lincolnshire that are being shared across our social media platforms

From the Chairman

Following the coastal flooding in 2013, this year has seen a period of recovery, adaptation and planning for the future on sites directly affected and beyond. The most significant decision was to demolish many of the structures at Gibraltar Point, including the visitor and education centres, which were irreparably damaged.

We celebrated the end of the project to establish the new Willow Tree Fen Nature Reserve in the south of the county, a major nature reserve purchase to complete the acquisition of the Woodhall Spa Airfield, part of a major Living Landscape area and the gifting of land in the Humberhead Levels (north-west Lincolnshire) with a long-term view to establishing a large nature reserve in this special part of the county.

After many years of relatively little change the Trust's membership increased to 26,128 members, to the highest ever level. Along with impressive gifts in wills the Trust is in a strong financial position to deliver ambitious plans over the next few years.

The Trust is essentially a voluntary organisation with activities organised on the basis that volunteers play an essential part in managing the charity's affairs, in deciding on its priorities and in conducting a large part of its business. As well as harnessing great resources of expertise, knowledge and energy, our voluntary character has great benefits for involving individuals and communities and lends local grassroots credibility to our work.

Volunteers are involved at every level and in every aspect of the charity's work. Without their support and the support of our members, the achievements outlined here would not be possible. The Trust simply could not function without our volunteers and members. Thank you, to every one of you: members, volunteers, partners and staff, for your support and hard work.

Geoff Trinder, Chairman

Our vision:

Lincolnshire and the neighbouring
sea and estuaries to be rich in
wildlife for the benefit of **everyone**



Five years ago Willow Tree Fen was an arable farm with depressions where the crops failed (inset), today it is still farmed by light cattle grazing that allows wildlife to flourish.



Creating a Living Landscape

After five years the external funding for the project to establish Willow Tree Fen nature reserve came to an end. Despite being a drained arable farm prior to 2009, the fenland reserve has developed fast. Over winter water levels reached another high level attracting huge numbers of wildfowl with increasing numbers of visitors, using the improved access facilities, have enjoyed.

Funders including Lincolnshire County Council and Natural England joined volunteers and staff to celebrate the success of the project in May. In June, a Bioblitz, where people try and record as much wildlife as possible within a certain amount of time, helped assess the level of biodiversity now on the reserve. In all, almost 600 species were found, including 150 new species for the site, bringing the site total to 819.

In the wider **South Lincolnshire Fens** surveys of fenland drains, as part of Local Wildlife Site identification work, found a network of botanically rich drains.

Funding secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the **Wildflower Meadow Network** project enabled continuation of the road verge survey work as part of the highly successful Life on the Verge project and increased community work in meadow creation. Red Hill nature reserve, having been selected as one of the country's Coronation Meadows to mark Queen Elizabeth II's landmark year, has been used as a seed source for a further extension of the site. Two acres of the adjacent field have been restored.

Over the summer holidays, over 90 teenagers from eight National Citizen Service groups planted 3,300 wildflowers, sourced from Red Hill, to create 9,000m² of meadows in community green spaces in Wellingore, Navenby, Branston, Sleaford, Grantham, Louth and Caistor.

The delivery phase of the **Lincolnshire Coastal Grazing Marshes**, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and hosted by East Lindsey District Council (ELDC), came to an end. Work to ensure a legacy for the project is underway with the Trust playing a key role in taking this forward.

The acquisition of the former Woodhall Spa Airfield was completed with funds secured from WREN, a generous legacy from a local benefactor and many donations from supporters across the country. Work to restore it to a nature reserve while retaining some of the military heritage is underway. Much of the work



Avocets are just one of the species attracted to the new accessible wetlands created at Middlemarsh Farm and Manby through the Coastal Grazing Marshes project

As Lincolnshire's Coronation Meadow, Red Hill is already fulfilling Prince Charles' wish for meadows to be a source of wildflower seed for creating new meadows

ROBERT ENDERBY



Groups of teenagers spent part of their summer holidays collecting seed from Red Hill and planting wildflowers to create new community meadows

has been by heavy machinery, altering the topography of the landscape from that of a quarry and restoring it to a condition more conducive to acid grassland and heathland.

Work on restoration of the Trust's new **Huttoft Marsh** nature reserve, to establish coastal grazing marsh and dune habitat, is well underway after a delayed start. This will significantly extend the area of the **Coastal Country Park** managed for wildlife. The area is being considered as one of the county's first local designated Nature Improvement Areas.

In the **Humberhead Levels**, land was acquired near Haxey with a view to a long term wetland habitat creation. Gravel extraction across much of the site and adjacent land continues and will take many years to complete. Phased restoration for wildlife will take place on Trust and neighbouring land. The Nature Improvement Area (NIA) partnership project, working across part of the Humberhead Levels, is underway.

Improving access and facilities

The visitor experience at **Whisby Nature Park** was greatly improved with the opening of the new railway bridge providing access for pedestrians, wheel chairs and Trust vehicles to both sides of the reserve. This was positively received after a long period of closure for safety and construction.

The new bridge, funded by Network Rail and Lincolnshire County Council has been sympathetically designed into the landscape and important nightingale habitat through close cooperation with the Trust. A structure, affectionately named **The Barn**, was installed at the entrance to the reserve. With great views it plays host to a range of activities arranged by volunteers and staff to engage visitors.

Plans for an elevated visitor centre to replace the flood damaged buildings at **Gibraltar Point** were approved and funding secured for its construction from the Coastal Community Fund and Lincolnshire County Council along with a contribution from the Trust. Alternative permanent facilities for education delivery are still being considered.

Far Ings visitor and education centre was refurbished following the flood damage and re-opened in August. School groups started visiting again and there was a programme of children's activities. Visitors can once again enjoy a cup of coffee in the spectacular viewing gallery whilst taking in panoramic views of the nature reserve and Humber Bridge.

The enthusiastic Whisby Wildlife Watch group members impressed the judges of The Wildlife Trusts' Watch Group of the Year Award with the variety and inventiveness of their activities



SHERI LAKE

Inspiring people

Delivery of education and events at Far Ings and Gibraltar Point was greatly affected by the flood damage in December 2013. Alternative arrangements were made at both sites including tipis at Gibraltar Point, reminiscent of the earliest education visits to the nature reserve in the 1950s and 60s.

Students from nearly 200 schools, colleges and universities participated in **formal education visits** at Gibraltar Point, Whisby Nature Park and Far Ings, along with Donna Nook and Snipe Dales, which were both increasingly used.

Whisby Watch group won The Wildlife Trusts' **Watch Group of the Year Award** for their activities during 2014 presented on a film made by the young people attending each month. The recently established Alford group was highly commended. The total number of Watch groups is 11, giving good coverage across Lincolnshire. Watch groups are predominantly run by dedicated volunteers; these groups have been shown to be nurturing the conservationists of the future. Two young people received the highest individual Watch award, some of the first in the country. Associate School membership remains stable with 17 groups.

Throughout the year staff, volunteers and Area Groups organised nearly 300 events with over 10,000 participants and attended over 30 external events including the Lincolnshire Show and British Birdwatching Fair.

Marsh harriers bred successfully at Far Ings with two pairs raising a total of four chicks

Restoring Living Seas

Survey work has been completed from land and sea with a **Seasearch** dive undertaken in the Wash for the first time delivering exciting results. Seawatching has continued to deliver good records of harbour porpoise and raising public interest.

Despite considerable efforts to promote sites off the Lincolnshire coast, no **Marine Conservation Zones** (MCZ) previously recommended to government have been included in the first two tranches to be considered for designation. The area off the Lincolnshire coast is however, considered an area of search for potential protective designation for mobile species (birds and cetaceans). The Trust, through its Marine Planning Officer, a unique role in the NGO sector, has actively engaged in major developments and plans in the North Sea and around the UK, most notably windfarms.

The seal colony at **Donna Nook** had another successful year with an increase in pups born. Despite



MANDY WEST



Little terns nesting on the beach at Gibraltar Point are very vulnerable to disturbance and predation. 2014 was their best year for a decade with 26 chicks fledging.



this Blakeney Point in Norfolk overtook it as the largest grey seal breeding colony in England. Visitors showed increased support for the Trust through increased sales of goods, donations and the numbers of members recruited during the season.

Another breeding success for a marine dependent species was little terns at Gibraltar Point. With increased wardening and improved protective fencing little terns had their best breeding year for a decade with 26 chicks fledged.

Working together

The **Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership** (GLNP), hosted by the Trust, has made good progress most notably: the agreement with the Lincolnshire Bird Club to include its massive data set of county bird records in the record centre and work to identify the distribution of alien invasive plant species across the county.



The Trust plays an active role in the Humber Nature Partnership which is well placed to tackle the complex issues around the estuary. Work with local authorities, industry and other bodies to develop a strategic mitigation plan for wildlife in the area known as the South Humber Gateway has finally resulted in a positive agreement. Such a plan is being considered for the wider Humber and would ensure that measures are put in place in advance of new development so that the future of habitats and species in and linked to the estuary are not jeopardised.

The Trust continues as a partner on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Joint Advisory Committee and in the Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project which is improving watercourse habitats in the Wolds.

Campaigning for wildlife

The Trust remains actively involved in forward planning to try to ensure appropriate policies are included in local and national plans and strategies to protect nature conservation sites from inappropriate development and other activity and achieve more resilience to climate change and other pressures.

This year a significant focus has been on local interpretation of the new Common Agriculture Policy, particularly influencing targeting of the new Countryside Stewardship scheme. During the year the Trust worked closely with all the county's local planning authorities and contributed to a number of development documents.

A second Heritage Lottery Fund funded training post was successfully completed. Funding has been secured for similar roles in the future from another funder

Financial overview 2014 - 2015

The current Financial Year has, as usual, produced a number of challenges and a number of opportunities.

On the positive side, the purchase of the final phase of Woodhall Spa Airfield was completed, as planned, and this acquisition gives the trust a great opportunity to create a significant Living Landscape area in the Bain Valley. Membership income and investment income have held up well, and our investments have shown a healthy increase in value of £353k, which is not reflected in the income figures below.

Legacies of £800k have boosted our income significantly and I would like to thank all those individuals who thought it important to support the Trust's work in the county. We are particularly grateful to the late Anastasia Healey, Joan Palethorpe and John Allen for their generous contributions. These legacies allow the Trust to support a number of ongoing initiatives and there are plans in place to acquire additional land adjacent to our Rush Furlong and Kingerby Beck reserves, whilst also recruiting two new project officers to develop and better manage our existing reserves and Living Landscapes projects.

The major challenge during the year has been managing our presence at Gibraltar Point without the benefit of a visitor centre. Members of staff have worked really hard to manage this transitional period

and have offered a warm welcome, a hot drink and a bacon roll whilst operating from a mobile catering unit. There is now light at the end of this particular tunnel, as construction work gets underway on the new visitor centre.

There has, however, been an impact upon our sales and catering business and costs have been stripped out of the trading company, Lapwings Consultants Ltd, to ensure that this business is able to trade close to "break-even", pending the agreement of an insurance claim for "loss of gross profit" and "additional cost of working".

This claim is still under negotiation and as there is no certainty on the final settlement, this payment will be included in next year's figures. During the current year, the trust received £350k in settlement of the insurance claim for stock and fittings damaged in the tidal surge. This sum is included in the Audited Accounts but is not included in the income figures below.

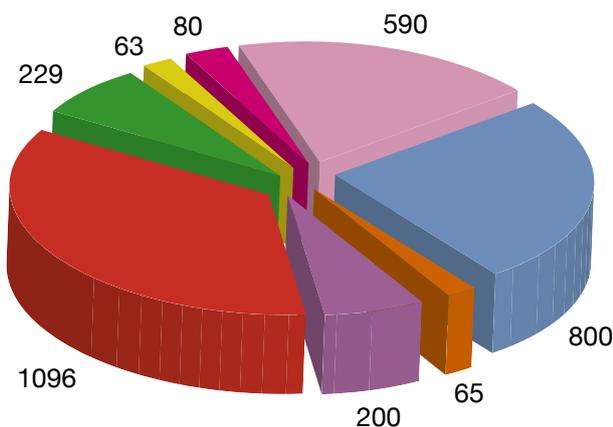
In summary, this has again been an interesting year, but the continued financial strength of the Trust allied to the ongoing support of members, volunteers and staff leaves us well placed to achieve our strategic goals in the coming years.

David Cohen
Honorary Treasurer

Thank you to everyone who has supported us this year.

Income

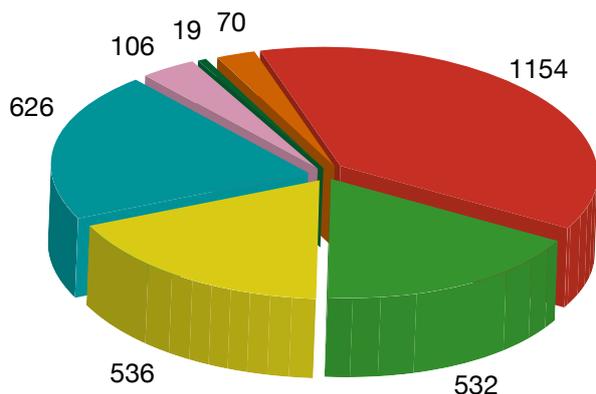
Total £3,123K



- Subscriptions, donations & gift aid
- Legacies
- Merchandising income
- Investment income
- Nature reserve income
- Wider countryside conservation
- Inspiring people
- Other income

Expenditure

Total £2,417K
excluding nature reserve acquisition



- Nature reserve management
- Wider countryside conservation
- Inspiring people
- Nature reserve acquisitions
- Costs of generating voluntary income
- Governance costs
- Merchandising costs

Future Plans

- Deliver sustainable replacement visitor centre at Gibraltar Point and develop plans for education facilities.
- Develop 'Wild Coast and Marshes Living Landscape Area' from Lincolnshire Coastal Grazing Marshes and Coastal Country Park projects as potential Nature Improvement Area.
- Agree operating arrangements with Ministry of Defence at Former Wainfleet Range and Natural England at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes National Nature Reserve.
- Maximise opportunities arising from the Whisby Nature Park's 25th anniversary and the opening of the new bridge.
- Develop full restoration plan for Woodhall Spa Airfield to include Moor Farm, Kirkby Moor and Kirkby Low Wood.
- Develop the Fens as a Nature Improvement Area with potential substantial land acquisition.
- Actively promote legacies with new materials and solicitors' event.
- Commence implementation of the new Strategic Plan 2015-20.

Acknowledgements

The Trust is a voluntary, charitable organisation whose work is dependent on the goodwill, financial support and voluntary input of individuals, businesses, local authorities and voluntary bodies. We acknowledge with thanks the help of all our supporters. We are grateful to the following for substantial financial support in 2014/2015 through donations, grants and the sponsorship of projects:

Anglian Water	Forestry Commission	North Kesteven District Council
Biffaward	Heritage Lottery Fund	North Lincolnshire Council
Cargill PLC	Lincolnshire County Council	Paw Print Charitable Trust
Centrica	Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service	RSPB
Defra	Ministry of Defence	RSWT
East Lindsey District Council	Natural England	South Holland District Council
Environment Agency	North East Lindsey Drainage Board	Vine House Farm
Esmée Fairburn Foundation		Waste Recycling Environmental (WREN)
The European Union		

Legacies

Receipts from legacies form a substantial part of our unrestricted income, allowing us to find match funding for a variety of projects and to maintain our Conservation and Development Funds. During 2014/15 the Trust has been notified of bequests from the Wills of the following:

Simon Maltby	Peter Grant	Robert Thomas Pearson
Kenneth Oswald Simmons	Joan Palethorpe	Anne Denise Lole
Dennis William Richardson	John Allen	Betty Marion Crickett
Betty Eileen Stuart	Brian Dawson	John Monks
Charles John Dalgleish Shackles	Charlotte Drewery	Anastasia Elizabeth Healey

Corporate Members

Corporate Membership of the Trust is designed to provide an effective means for companies to demonstrate care for the local environment. The following were Corporate Members during the reporting period:

Aggregate Industries	F W Cupit (Printers) Limited	North East Lindsey Drainage Board
Alfred Enderby Limited	Fenland Laundries Limited	Novartis Grimsby
Andrew & Co LLP	Growing Wild Limited	Omex Agriculture Limited
Anglian Water Services	Hornsby Travel Services Limited	Page Paper Limited
ARH Tucker & Sons	Humber Bridge Board	Riva Construction
Associated British Ports	J E Piccaver & Co	Rowhire Limited
B A Bush & Son Limited	J W Ruddock & Sons Limited	S Betteridge Paving Contractor
Badley Ashton & Associates Limited	John E Haith Limited	SCS Technology Solutions Limited
Cargill PLC	John Kinch Group	Sibelco UK
Chapel Garden Centre	Kes Building Maintenance	Singleton Birch Limited
Cleethorpes Builders Merchants	Lafarge Aggregates Ltd	TCS UK Spraying
Clugston Group Limited	Lincolnshire Co-operative Society Limited	The Jungle Zoo
ConocoPhillips (UK) Limited	Lindsey Oil Refinery Limited	Truelove Property & Construction
Cray Valley Products Limited	Lowfields Leisure Limited	Yara (UK) Limited
Creative Nature	Mortons of Horncastle Limited	
Crowder & Sons Ltd	Natureland Seal Sanctuary	

Headquarters/Registered Office

Banovallum House
Manor House Street
Horncastle
Lincolnshire LN9 5HF
Tel: 01507 526667
Fax: 01507 525732
Email: info@lincstrust.co.uk
Website: www.lincstrust.org.uk

Far Ings National Nature Reserve and Visitor Centre

Barton-on-Humber DN18 5RG
Tel: 01652 637055

Gibraltar Point National Nature Reserve

Skegness PE24 4SU
Tel: 01754 898057

Snipe Dales Nature Reserve and Country Park

Lusby, Spilsby PE23 4JB
Tel: 01507 588401

Whisby Nature Park

Tel: 01522 500676

Education Centre

Tel: 01522 696926
Thorpe-on-the-Hill,
Lincoln LN6 9BW

Senior Staff

Chief Executive: P Learoyd
Head of Reserves: D Bromwich
Head of Conservation: C Steel
Head of Finance: S J Smith

Patrons

The Earl of Yarborough
Baroness Willoughby de Eresby

Presidents:

Dr A E Smith CBE MA
Mr D N Robinson OBE MSc
Mr D F Wright MSc MSB
Mr B Tear BSc

President and Trustee
Vice President and Trustee
Vice President
Vice President

Trustees/Directors:

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Mrs J Mellor MSc
Mr T S Sands
Dr D A Sheppard BSc PhD
Mr D A Cohen
Mrs M A S Bates BSc
Mrs C E Harrison BSc
Mr C Morrison CSci
Mr J Purvis BSc FCA
Mrs A Quigley BA
Ms T Smalley MSc
Mr P Stapleton FCA
Mr E J Redshaw

Chairman
Deputy Chairman
Deputy Chairman
Deputy Chairman
Honorary Treasurer
Retired 16.09.14