

Charity Registration No. 269535 (England and Wales)

Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

**Annual report and financial statements
for the year ended 31 March 2023**

Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

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Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

Legal and administrative information

Charity registration number: 269535 (England and Wales)

Trustees

Clifford Dean: Chair
Philip Jones: Vice-Chair
John Baker: Hon. Secretary
Alan Martin: Hon. Treasurer
Patrick Bonham: Membership Secretary
Claire Bayntun
Catherine Emmitt
Christine George
Stephen Masters
James Tomlinson
Linda Wren

Independent examiner

Roy Holland BSc (Econ.), FCA
Holland Harper LLP
26 High Street
Battle
East Sussex TN33 0EA

Bankers

Lloyds Bank
New Romney Branch
PO Box 1000
BX1 1LT

Charity office

2 Watch Cottage
The Ridge
Winchelsea Beach
East Sussex TN36 4LU

Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

Report of the Trustees For the year ended 31 March 2023

The Trustees of the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England & Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- 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 proper accounting records that 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 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Trustees

Trustees are appointed by the Members and those who have served during the year are as follows

Clifford Dean: Chair
Philip Jones: Vice-Chair
John Baker: Hon. Secretary
Alan Martin: Hon. Treasurer (*appointed 18th January 2023*)
Patrick Bonham: Membership Secretary
John Barnes (*resigned 8th October 2022*)
Claire Bayntun (*appointed 8th October 2022*)
Catherine Emmitt
Christine George (*appointed 18th January 2023*)
Stephen Masters (*appointed 8th October 2022*)
Sheena Morgan (*resigned 18th January 2023*)
Michael Russell (*resigned 18th January 2023*)
James Tomlinson

Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

Report of the Trustees For the year ended 31 March 2023

John Trowell (*resigned 8th October 2022*)

John Willsher (*resigned 8th October 2022*)

Linda Wren

Constitution and Objects

The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve is constituted by a Deed of Trust dated 31st May 1974 and is a charity registered in England and Wales, number 269535. The trustees shall hold the Trust Fund and its income upon trust to apply them for the following objectives:

- assisting the management of the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve through voluntary work and contributions.
- fund raising by way of subscription and activities and organising local publicity for the Nature Reserve.
- recruiting members to support the Nature Reserve.
- co-operating with other Local Bodies and Authorities and SWT taking all such other steps as may from time to time be necessary to preserve the interests of the Nature Reserve.
- to do all such things and to take all such measures as may be considered to be in the interest of the Nature Reserve at the discretion of the group and with the approval of the Management Committee and SWT or such other body as shall from time to time be responsible for the running of the Nature Reserve.

Review of developments, activities and achievements - Chair's Report for the year ended 31 March 2023

The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve had another successful year with membership rising to its highest ever total of 2,190, and a financial surplus of income over expenditure of £41,848. Despite the downward revaluation of Watch Cottage by £300,000, this surplus when added to the brought forward balance left the Friends with financial reserves of £703,458 at the end of the year of which £246,637 was in cash or deposit accounts.

During the year 194 new members were recruited, less than the post-lockdown resurgence of 311 in the previous year, but still a notable achievement perhaps reflecting the improved online recruitment and the active role of our Membership Secretary in reminding lapsed members. Four newsletters were sent out and members were kept informed of activities and events through numerous postings on Facebook, as well as the website which is currently undergoing a re-design. Following the disruptions resulting from the Covid pandemic our programme of afternoon talks has now re-commenced for the remainder of 2023, and the Discovery Centre has hosted a Friends Open Day on the second Saturday of each month where second-hand books and craft items are sold. The Friends have also organised short and extended monthly walks as well as supporting those advertised by the Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT). The monthly 'Guide in a Hide' events have proved extremely successful and a 'Guide in a Train' was also run in conjunction with the Kent & East Sussex Railways.

The three books published by the Friends, The Shingle Shore, A New Way of Looking and Flowers of the Seashore continue to sell well from the Discovery Centre and local bookshops, and the other Friends badged products such as mugs, coasters and tea towels are also popular. Sales of these products increased by 40% over the previous year.

Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

Report of the Trustees For the year ended 31 March 2023

During the year there were a number of changes to the committee, with long-standing Trustees John Barnes, John Trowell, John Willsher, Sheena Morgan and Mike Russell retiring to be replaced by new

Trustees Claire Bayntun and Stephen Masters, while former Trustee Alan Martin has returned to the committee after a 3-year break. Apart from their distinct committee responsibilities, the retirees have all played a vital role over recent years in steering the Friends through the creation and development of the Discovery Centre, and we owe them our thanks. Whilst Sheena Morgan has stepped down as a Trustee she has agreed to continue to edit our Newsletter. As a committee we have yet to reach equality on grounds of gender (7M/4F), the majority of Trustees are past retirement age (8/3) and ethnic diversity is very limited within the local community, but these facts are kept in mind and will be improved when possible.

The Trustees met formally on 7 occasions during the year in addition to the AGM in October, but were regularly in contact through less formal meetings and email correspondence in order to progress Friends business. Separate meetings were also held regularly with representatives of the SWT, both with regard to the ongoing management of the Nature Reserve but especially to discuss the operation and development of the Discovery Centre which is heavily dependent on the Friends' pool of volunteers. In addition, the planned changes to the SWT reserves management team and the planned retirement of the long-serving Rye Harbour manager, Dr Barry Yates, generated a number of high level meetings with SWT Directors to discuss these changes and how they would affect the reserve management and the Friends' role. In particular the Trustees were concerned about how these changes would affect the use of Watch Cottage which is owned by the Friends but has been used for many years by the reserve manager for his family, an office and a storage facility for equipment and materials. At the time of writing many of these issues remain unresolved and there are still 2 vacancies amongst the local SWT staff to be recruited. However, the Friends have determined that improvements are essential to bring Watch Cottage up to a better standard and the property has been revalued.

In order to bring the management of our charity more closely into line with the Charities Commission Code of Practice, we have engaged Stephen Gilbert (a Chartered Governance Professional) to guide us through a review of all our governance documents and processes. Following his attendance at an initial meeting a sub-group was formed (of Secretary, Treasurer, Claire Bayntun and Stephen Masters) to take this review forward and report back to the full Board of Trustees. Its initial focus has been on clarifying and updating our Mission, Vision and Strategy statements, to be followed by a clarification and the documentation of trustee roles.

On July 6th 2022 our Chair and the SWT Chief Executive Tor Lawrence were invited to an event where they were presented with a Sussex Heritage Trust Award in the Public and Community Category for the design of the Discovery Centre. This award, some 14 months after its opening, is further evidence of the success of the new visitor centre which could not have been possible without the extraordinary support that the project received from members of the Friends and local supporters.

One of the main reasons why the Friends' financial results were better in 2022-23 than in the previous year was because the financial contributions towards the running costs of the reserve (mainly salaries, equipment and fencing) were significantly less at only £34,291 against £72,818 in 2021-22. Finding the correct balance between short-term expenditure and longer-term investment in equipment and potential further land purchases is always difficult, but the Trustees are actively reviewing how best to support and improve all aspects of the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve for the benefit of the increasing number of visitors that come to enjoy its wildlife and environment.

Review of financial transactions

The financial statements as set out on pages 7 to 12 summarise the transactions of the charity during the year ended 31 March 2023, at which date there was a surplus for the year of £41,848 (2022: a deficit of £4,908), which when added to the funds brought forward of £961,610 and after a downward revaluation of the freehold property by £300,000 leaves total funds to be carried forward of £703,458.

Reserves policy

The trustees' policy is to maintain a level of reserves which will provide a stable base for its continuing activities while at the same time ensuring excessive funds are not accumulated. The trustees believe that the free reserves of £253,458 are sufficient for its current purposes and these are reviewed on a regular basis.

Risk Management

The trustees have examined the major strategic, business and operational risks which the charity faces and confirm that systems have been established to enable regular reports to be produced so that necessary steps can be taken to lessen these risks.

Public Benefit

The trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning future activities and setting grant making policies. They will only provide grants which clearly demonstrate public benefit.

Cliff Dean
Signed on behalf of the board of Trustees

2023

**Independent Examiner's report to the Trustees
For the year ended 31 March 2023**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve (the Trust) for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Respective Responsibilities of trustees and examiner

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 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

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 seeking 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

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:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 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.

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 a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Roy Holland BSc (Econ.), FCA

2023

**Holland Harper LLP
Chartered Accountants**

26 High Street, Battle
East Sussex TN33 0EA

Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

Statement of financial activities For the year ended 31 March 2023

	Note	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
Income from			
Membership subscriptions		24,992	27,638
Donations and legacies		36,404	36,357
Trading income		11,540	8,377
Gift Aid		11,388	5,374
Events		2,365	2,037
Interest		1,700	1,205
Other income		2,004	1,615
Total income		90,393	82,603
Expenditure on			
Nature reserve projects and salary contributions		34,291	72,818
Merchandise costs		6,963	6,039
Newsletters and leaflets		1,912	2,730
Legal and professional costs	7	3,274	3,420
Other expenses	7	2,006	2,400
Bank charges	7	99	104
Total expenditure		48,545	87,511
Net income/(expenditure)		41,848	(4,908)
Fund balances as at 1 April 2022		961,610	966,518
Property revaluation		(300,000)	-
Fund balances at 31 March 2023	6	703,458	961,610

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the period.

All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

The figures shown for both years are all unrestricted funds.

The notes on pages 9 to 12 form part of these financial statements.

Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

Balance sheet
As at 31 March 2023

	Note	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
Fixed Assets			
Freehold property	2	450,000	750,000
Current assets			
Cash at bank		57,818	22,620
Deposit accounts		188,819	188,238
Trading stock	3	3,140	2,388
Debtors and prepayments	4	6,088	805
Total current assets		255,865	214,051
Creditors falling due within one year	5	(2,407)	(2,441)
Net current assets		253,458	211,610
Total assets		703,458	961,610
Fund balances	6	703,458	961,610

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue on behalf of the Board by:

Clifford Dean
Chair of trustees

2023

The notes on pages 9 to 12 form part of these financial statements.

1. Summary of significant accounting policies

1.1 Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's Deed of Trust, the Charities Act 2011, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019).

The financial statements have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in October 2019 rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

These financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023 are the first financial statements of Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve prepared in accordance with FRS 102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland. The date of transition to FRS 102 was 1 April 2021. The reported financial position and financial performance for the previous period are not affected by the transition to FRS 102.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, (modified to include the revaluation of freehold properties). The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The functional currency of the charity is £.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the Trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Income

1.3.1 Donations and gifts

Income is recognised in the year in which the charity is entitled to receipt and the amount can be measured with reasonable certainty.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
For the year ended 31 March 2023

1.3.2 Investment income

Investment income is accounted for on a receivable basis.

1.3.3 Volunteer time

No amount is included in the financial statements for volunteer time in line with the SORP.

1.3.4 Trading income

Income from trading activities includes income earned from fundraising events and trading activities to raise funds for the charity. Income is received in exchange for supplying goods and services in order to raise funds and is recognised when entitlement has occurred.

1.4 Expenditure

Expenditure is included on an accruals basis including irrecoverable VAT, and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

1.5 Taxation

The Trust is a registered charity and is not liable to United Kingdom income tax or corporation tax on charitable activities.

1.6 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

1.7 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of any impairment losses.

It is not considered necessary to depreciate the freehold property held which is instead shown at a valuation in the accounts.

1.8 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
For the year ended 31 March 2023

2. Tangible fixed assets

Land and buildings with a carrying amount of £450,000 were revalued at 31 March 2023 by Rush Witt & Wilson, independent valuers not connected with the charity, on the basis of market value.

At 31 March 2023, had the revalued asset been carried at historic cost, the carrying amount would have been £48,000 (2022 - £48,000).

The revaluation surplus is disclosed in note 6.

Freehold, Land & Buildings	£
Cost or valuation	
At 1 April 2022	750,000
Revaluation	(300,000)
At 31 March 2023	450,000

3. Trading stocks

Stocks are stated at the lower of cost and estimated selling price less costs to complete and sell. Cost includes all costs of purchase, costs of conversion and other costs incurred in bringing stock to its present location and condition. Cost is calculated using the first-in, first-out formula. Provision is made for damaged, obsolete and slow-moving stock where appropriate.

	2023	2022
	£	£
Opening stock	2,388	1,656
Purchases	7,715	6,780
Less cost of sales	(6,963)	(6,048)
Closing stock	3,140	2,388

4. Debtors and prepayments

	2023	2022
	£	£
Other debtors and prepayments	639	805
Gift Aid	5,449	-
Total debtors and prepayments	6,088	805

Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
For the year ended 31 March 2023

5. Creditors

	2023	2022
	£	£
Subscriptions paid in advance	1,383	-
833 Lottery	24	-
Stock purchases	-	1,341
Independent examination fees	1,000	1,100
Total creditors	2,407	2,441

6. Fund balances

	Unrestricted	Revaluation	Total
	Funds	Reserve	£
	£	£	£
At 1 April 2022	259,610	702,000	961,610
Surplus for the year	41,848	-	41,848
Land and buildings revaluation	-	(300,000)	(300,000)
At 31 March 2023	301,458	402,000	703,458

7. Running costs

	2023	2022
	£	£
Independent examination fees	1,160	1,360
Insurance	1,914	2,060
Professional fees	200	-
Other costs	2,006	2,400
Bank charges	99	104
Total costs	5,379	5,924

Running costs of the charity include governance costs and general administration. The Trustees, who are considered to be key management personnel, received no remuneration or expenses during the year (2022: £Nil).