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TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2026
FOR
ESSEX WILDLIFE TRUST
A REGISTERED CHARITY
AND
A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

Registered Company Number: 638666
Registered Charity Number: 210065

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The registered name of the Charity is Essex Wildlife Trust Limited.
It is registered with the Charity Commission in England and Wales with the number 210065.

Members of the Board

The Trustees who served during the period and the dates of their most recent election or retirement were as follows:

S Balser – Trustee - Re-elected 22 10 2022
G Duffield - Trustee - Resigned 01 01 2025
C Hawkins – Trustee - Elected 07 11 2023
K Hazelhurst – Chair - Resigned 29 05 2025
R Holmes - Treasurer - Resigned 29 05 2025
C Joynson – Trustee - Re-elected 07 11 2023
T Kaime – Trustee – Resigned - 02 09 2025
E Simonsson – Trustee - Re-elected 28 09 2024
M Wall - Trustee - Re-elected 28 09 2024
J Wren – Chair - Elected 24 10 2025
C Moxley – Trustee - Elected – 12 02 2026
T Young – Trustee – Elected – 29 05 2025
P Roberts – Treasurer – Elected – 29 05 2025

Principal Officers of the Charity:
Chief Executive Officer: R Yates
Company Secretary: C Dalling

Advisers:
Auditors: Moore Kingston Smith LLP, Orbital House, 20 Eastern Road, Romford, Essex, RM1 3PJ
Bankers: Barclays Bank PLC, Barclays Business Centre, 40-41 High Street, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1BE.
Investment managers: Rathbones Greenbank, 30 Gresham Street, London, EC2V 7QN.
VAT advisers: Constable VAT Consultancy LLP, Manningtree Road, Dedham, CO7 6BL.

Introduction to the report of the Board who are also the Trustees of Essex Wildlife Trust Limited
The Board have pleasure in presenting their report together with the audited financial statements for the period ended 31 March 2026. The Board have adopted the provisions of the Charities SORP (FRS 102) – 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 (effective 1 January 2019) and the Charities Act 2011, in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity. The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006.

Report and consolidated financial statements: Period ended 31 March 2026
Telephone: 01621 862 960
Email: enquiries@essexwt.org.uk
Website: www.essexwt.org.uk
Registered Charity No. 210065
Company Registered No. 638666
VAT Registered No. 945 7459 77

Registered office:
Essex Wildlife Trust
Abbotts Hall
Great Wigborough
Colchester
Essex, CO5 7RZ

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Objectives and Activities

Essex Wildlife Trust is protecting wildlife for the future and for the people of Essex and is required by charity and company law to act within the objects set out in its Memorandum and Articles of Association. These are shown below.

The objectives of the charity are:

For the benefit of the public, to advance, promote and further the conservation, maintenance and protection of:

- Wildlife and its habitats
- Places of natural beauty
- Places of zoological, botanical, geographical, historical, archaeological or scientific interest
- Features of landscape with geological, physiographical or amenity value in any ways that are charitable in law and in particular, but not exclusively, in ways that further biodiversity

To advance the education of the public in:

- The principles and practice of sustainable development
- The principles and practice of biodiversity conservation

Public Benefit Statement

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, 'Charities and Public Benefit'. The Trustees refer to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when reviewing the Trust's aims and objectives, in planning future activities, and setting and developing Strategic Plans as they occur. A strategic plan was agreed for the period 2020 to 2025 which builds on the work of the previous strategy. This has been further enhanced during early 2023, to align end dates with the wider Wildlife Trust targets and national targets, to 2030. The new strategic plan now covers the period to 2030.

Strategic Description

Since its inception in 1959, Essex Wildlife Trust has succeeded in considerably increasing the quantity and quality of the land it holds and manages as nature reserves, and through its Nature Discovery Centres continues to offer the public gateways to accessing our wonderful green spaces. Our premises are in the main freely open to the general public, the only exceptions being those reserves where particular care has to be taken due to health and safety concerns, or for specific species protection.

Our objectives and activities

The Trust organises a wide programme of events with a variety of stakeholders such as local authorities, schools, landowners, other organisations and the general public. These programmes will continue to have a long-term benefit to stakeholders.

Other beneficiaries of the work delivered by Essex Wildlife Trust include a team of over 2,000 volunteers who serve regularly in a variety of ways and who benefit from the skills training and opportunities offered, including health and wellbeing benefits. The contribution of volunteers alongside the staff is fundamental to the success and efficient running of the Trust. Like minded organisations and local authorities for whom the Trust manages sites or provides information also benefit.

The Trust caters at certain sites for the needs of people who have accessibility or other specific needs and one of the Trust's key objectives is to make more of our sites fully accessible, to ensure that nature truly is for everyone.

The strategic activities, aims and objectives of the Trust are reviewed every year by the Trustees, alongside budget setting.

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Strategic report
The information below, including the Achievements and Performance, the Financial Review, the Risk Management Statement, and the Summary of Future Plans, forms the Strategic Report for the purpose of the Companies Act 2006.

Chair and Chief Executive Officer introduction

People are at the heart of nature's recovery, and this year we saw the power of that collective effort in action. Together with our members, funders, supporters, partners, volunteers and staff, habitats were restored, people were inspired to connect with nature, and important steps were taken towards creating a wilder Essex.

As we transitioned from a calendar year to a financial year, this report covers the period January 2025 to March 2026. During these fifteen months, while the wider economic climate remained challenging, financial stability has been our focus, and we have worked hard to strengthen the foundations of the Trust. Despite the ongoing challenges, there is much to celebrate. From ambitious landscape-scale projects and new commercial endeavours, this year was one of progress and opportunity for Essex Wildlife Trust.

Across the county, major projects moved forward at pace. Large-scale habitat restoration, conservation grazing and infrastructure improvements continued to transform Abbotts Hall into a flagship landscape for nature recovery. At Bottengoms, former home of the late nature writer Ronald Blythe, an inspiring vision has emerged, creating opportunities to connect nature, culture and creativity. In the south of the county, exciting futures for Thameside Nature Discovery Park and Chafford Gorges Nature Discovery Park were set in motion.

This year, Biodiversity Net Gain became a reality at Abbotts Hall, creating opportunities to secure investment in wildlife-rich habitats, while Essex Ecology and other commercial initiatives continued to grow and evolve. A record-breaking performance at our Nature Discovery Centres demonstrated the value of our centres as gateways to nature, alongside generating vital income for conservation.

We are particularly proud of the role Essex Wildlife Trust played in helping shape and launch Essex's Local Nature Recovery Strategy, creating a local blueprint for nature's recovery. At the same time, we continued to be a voice for wildlife. Locally, we challenged planning and development in Essex and, nationally, we campaigned against the Government's plans to weaken protections for nature.

It is impossible to do justice to everything achieved over the past 15 months in just a few pages, but we hope this Impact Report provides a snapshot of the difference Essex Wildlife Trust has made for wildlife and people across the county. None of these achievements would have been possible without the support and commitment of our members, funders, partners, volunteers and staff. Together, we are helping to create a wilder future for Essex, and we hope you feel proud of all we have achieved.



James Wren – Chair



Rich Yates – Chief Executive Officer

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Restore

One of our Strategic Aims is to ensure that 30% of land and sea in Essex is actively managed for nature's recovery by 2030.

Research has shown that this is the threshold for ecosystem health and species connectivity, helping to combat the climate and biodiversity crises. This is a county-wide target, supported by the Local Nature Partnership and aligned to national and international goals. Nature's recovery depends on action at scale. Across Essex, we are restoring habitats, recovering species and influencing decisions that shape the future of our county. This year, we worked with farmers, businesses, communities and decision-makers to create more space for wildlife on land and along our rivers and around our coast. From restoring seagrass meadows and supporting the return of water voles, to defending Local Wildlife Sites from damaging development, our partnerships are helping nature recover beyond the boundaries of our nature reserves. Meanwhile, evidence-led conservation, habitat restoration and investment in our own land are creating bigger, better and more connected places for wildlife to thrive. Together, with the support of our members, funders and supporters, we are making meaningful progress towards a wilder Essex.

SCALING-UP COASTAL RESTORATION

To achieve our Strategic Aim, we must be ambitious, collaborate and think long term. The launch of 'Transforming the Thames' marked a significant step towards this. With £4 million of funding awarded for the whole project, this seascape-scale programme aims to restore over 320 hectares of priority coastal habitats during the first five years of delivery. The Trust is a key delivery partner of Transforming the Thames and in 2025/26, we recruited for two specialist habitat recovery roles focusing on seagrass and saltmarsh, advanced restoration plans across multiple habitats, and brought together partners, communities and government agencies to recover our valuable coastline.

POSITIVE STEPS FOR RIVER SPECIES

After decades of decline, water voles are returning to the Colne and Blackwater catchments. As part of a regional-scale Waterlife Recovery Partnership, invasive mink has been almost entirely eradicated across Essex making rivers safe once again for endangered water voles. Alongside this, work progressed on the Essex Fish Migration Roadmap, and more than 70 barriers have been scoped for modifications which will help create healthier, better connected rivers for wildlife.

GIVING WILDLIFE A VOICE

As pressure for development grows, we continue to stand up for wildlife.
This year we challenged proposals threatening Local Wildlife Sites, helped shape Local Plans and influenced major infrastructure projects to deliver the best outcomes for nature. Through our campaigning efforts, 3,763 Essex residents wrote to MPs in a bid to protect nature through the Planning and Infrastructure Bill and over 700 people signed the national petition to ban bottom trawling in Marine Protected Areas.

Enhancing the conservation value of our land

MORE SPACE FOR NATURE

Thanks to the incredible support of members, donors and funders, we secured six acres of land to extend our existing Wrabness nature reserve. By protecting and enhancing priority habitats including grazing marsh, ponds and hedgerows, it will help safeguard threatened species such as nightingales and turtle doves, while contributing to nature's recovery across Essex. Together with new management agreements for additional land at Oliver Road Lagoons, we continue to strengthen our work to restore and connect habitats, creating a larger, more resilient landscape for wildlife.

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CONSERVATION GRAZING FOR WILDLIFE RECOVERY

Did you know, over 25% of the Trust's nature reserves rely on conservation grazing to make our reserves the best they can be for wildlife? Our grazing animals play a vital role in maintaining species-rich habitats across Essex. Despite challenging weather conditions, the team continued conservation grazing across priority nature reserves, welcomed 152 lambs and 24 calves, and secured investment in new approaches such as virtual fencing at Abbotts Hall, helping us manage habitats more effectively for wildlife.

PUTTING EVIDENCE AT THE HEART OF CONSERVATION

Good conservation starts with good evidence. Our staff and volunteers completed hundreds of ecological surveys, including for breeding birds, overwintering wetland birds, dormice and butterflies, as well as grassland, woodland and saltmarsh habitat condition surveys. We used our data-mapping tool, GIS, to analyse the distribution of habitats and species, developed evidence-based management plans for our nature reserves, and set-up field experiments to assess the impact of our management. The use of drones enabled us to monitor chalk grassland restoration work at Chafford Gorges and survey saltmarsh at Abbotts Hall and Fobbing Marsh.

Take Action

We need 1 in 4 people in Essex taking action for nature and climate by 2030. Research shows that this is the tipping point when behaviours become social norms. This is a county-wide target, supported by the Local Nature Partnership and increasingly adopted by partner organisations. Together, we are building a movement for nature – because a wilder Essex can only be achieved when people and wildlife thrive side by side. Across Essex, we are helping more people discover, value, and take action for wildlife through inspiring visitor experiences, learning programmes, volunteering, campaigns and community initiatives.
This year, our Nature Discovery Centres and nature reserves welcomed hundreds of thousands of visitors, while thousands more connected with nature through events, education sessions and campaigns. From family's pond-dipping for the first time to communities starting amazing local projects for wildlife, we are helping to create a county where people are empowered to act for the natural world.

GATEWAYS TO NATURE

Nature Discovery Centres aim to be inspiring gateways to great wildlife experiences. In 2025/26, we welcomed more than one million visitors and hosted hundreds of events, activities and experiences designed for all ages and interests. From families and first-time nature explorers at Belfairs and Ingrebourne to experienced birdwatchers at Abberton and Fingringhoe Wick, our events provided opportunities to discover, enjoy and take action for nature.

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

At Hanningfield Reservoir Nature Discovery Park, an exhibition by Cy Baker - inspired by the work of celebrated nature writer Ronald Blythe - brought together art, storytelling and wildlife. The exhibition attracted local and national media attention, helping new audiences engage with nature and highlighting the role of creativity in inspiring action for wildlife.

LOCAL AND SUSTAINABLE CHOICES

At our Nature Discovery Centres, we've been developing ways to enable more sustainable choices for visitors through thoughtfully curated food, drink and retail offers. From locally sourced beeswax beauty products and handmade candles by Essex makers to ethically produced stationery, wildlife-friendly gardening gifts and nature-inspired books, our retail ranges connected everyday purchases with positive action for wildlife. Every purchase supports nature's recovery across Essex, so this gifting does double the giving.

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Bringing people and wildlife closer together

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

Our growing school's programme engages children and young people from early years to college. In 2025, 197 schools brought more than 10,000 learners to our Nature Discovery Centres for curriculum linked, hands-on experiences. Beyond our centres, the team delivered weekly outdoor learning and forest school sessions in community settings, generating over 8,000 interactions with school children. Facilitated by the expertise and knowledge of our Wilder Learning Officers, our programmes give these children practical experience of the natural world and the opportunity to connect with nature through exploration and discovery.

NEW WOMEN'S GROUP LAUNCHED

We launched our Wild Women group, an exciting addition to our programme of events based at Hanningfield Reservoir Nature Discovery Park and Thameside Nature Discovery Park. The group meets monthly, creating a welcoming space for those who would like to connect more deeply with nature and peaceful, creative time outdoors. This has included some amazing nature-based activities such as Nordic slinging - a Scandinavian twine-braiding technique - food around a campfire, enjoying winter landscapes, listening to bird song and spotting signs of spring

CITIZEN SCIENTISTS SUPPORT HOUSE SPARROWS

Over 2,000 of our supporters answered the Trust's call to find out more about house sparrow populations. With 70% of house sparrows lost since the 1970s, the survey aimed to find out how we can support this specie's recovery. We reported that people who saw house sparrows most frequently had one of the following garden features: ponds, bird feeders and nest boxes. Thanks to this citizen science project, the Trust encouraged targeted actions for house sparrow recovery, and people in Essex spent more time in gardens noticing their garden birds.

Our volunteers are at the heart of everything we do

We are incredibly grateful to our 2,000 volunteers who contributed more than 146,000 hours in 2025/26, equivalent to 325 hours every day across 247 volunteering opportunities. From practical conservation and wildlife surveys to welcoming visitors and inspiring young people, our volunteers make an extraordinary difference and we couldn't create a wilder Essex without them.

BIG STEPS FOR BEACH-NESTING BIRDS

Volunteers played a vital role in the success of our Colne Point ringed plover project. Across the 95-day season, eight volunteers contributed more than 800 hours and engaged hundreds of visitors. Together, staff and volunteers walked an estimated 1,100 miles while monitoring nests and protecting breeding birds. Their dedication helped 49 chicks hatch, a 49% increase on 2024 and a remarkable rise from just one chick in 2023. For the first time on record, more nests succeeded than failed, demonstrating the impact of volunteer support.

AWARD-WINNING VOLUNTEERS

This year's Ray Marsh Award recognising outstanding volunteer contribution went to Peter Dimmick who has dedicated his time and knowledge to the Trust for 50 years. Peter volunteered alongside Ray Marsh who inspired this award, and now volunteers at The Naze Nature Discovery Centre; inspiring young and old - and everyone in between - to be interested in fossils and geology. During school visits, children flood around him, engaged and eager to learn. Peter embodies everything the Trust aspires to: he's always cheerful and encouraging, and his enthusiasm engages people in our charity's work and mission.

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A GREAT BIG THANK YOU

Our volunteer celebration events at Bedfords Park and The Naze brought together volunteers, staff and trustees to celebrate the many ways volunteers support the Trust. Special recognition was given to individuals and groups who have made an exceptional contribution, including volunteers who go above and beyond in our Nature Discovery Centres and on nature reserves, dedicated fundraisers, Local Groups who have raised significant funds, and those who lead talks, guided walks and events. Tasty food, walks and live music rounded off the evenings.

Local Groups connecting communities with nature

Local Groups bring together passionate volunteers through conservation efforts, engagement events and fundraising initiatives. Together, our Local Groups engaged more than 1,600 people and contributed over 1,200 volunteer hours during the year, demonstrating the incredible impact of local action. An enormous thank you to Local Groups for inspiring people and protecting local wildlife.

SUPPORTING CONSERVATION

Local Groups are helping to protect and restore wildlife through practical habitat conservation, wildlife monitoring and citizen science, helping to care for important places for nature across Essex. Local Groups support ecological surveys, Local Wildlife Site inspections and community biodiversity projects. In Uttlesford, volunteers delivered 82 work parties and over 1,200 hours of conservation work. These efforts are providing valuable benefits for wildlife and helping build a better understanding of nature locally.

MEANINGFUL LOCAL ACTION

Across Essex, Local Groups inspired people to connect with nature through a varied programme of walks, talks and community activities. More than 80 events were held during the year, including guided walks around nature reserves, wildlife talks, fungus forays, beach cleans, litter picks and family activities. Brentwood and Billericay Local Group showed school children how to build bird boxes, while Southend and Rochford Local Group shared the wonders of bees, fungi and dragonflies. These activities are helping more people discover, value and take action for wildlife in their local area.

RAISING FUNDS FOR WILDLIFE

Quiz nights, plant sales and seasonal events generated thousands of pounds in support of Essex Wildlife Trust's work. Funds raised helped contribute to the Wrabness land appeal and practical equipment for nature reserves. From Chelmsford's Local Group's community plant sale at Abberton Reservoir Nature Discovery Centre to Colchester's quiz nights attracting more than 150 people, Local Groups are proving that every event can make a lasting difference for wildlife.

Legators

The wonderful foresight and kindness of our legators enables us to increase our impact on wildlife in Essex in the coming years. In 2025/26, Gifts in Wills amounted to a very generous £1,560,156. All Gifts in Wills and Deeds of Variation, no matter what size, make a significant difference to what we can achieve, and we are truly grateful to every single person. A huge thank you to our wonderful legators in 2025/26.

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Financial review

The Group reported total income of £11.7m for the 15-month period ended 31 March 2026 (2024: £10.0m) and total expenditure of £13.6m (2024: £9.7m), resulting in a net deficit before actuarial gains and losses of £1.9m (2024: net surplus £0.2m) and a total movement in funds deficit of £1.8m (2024: surplus of £1.4m).

The comparative period covered 12 months to 31 December 2024 and is therefore not directly comparable to the current 15-month reporting period. The deficit reflects a combination of investment in the delivery of the Trust's strategic objectives, increased charitable activity expenditure and a challenging income environment.

Income performance remained resilient during the period despite some challenging income streams. Legacy income reduced to approximately £1.6m, reflecting the unpredictable nature of this source of funding, while membership income remained stable. Trading operations generated income of £4.3m, supported by strong performance from Essex Wildlife Sales Limited. Investment income contributed £0.3m despite continued volatility in financial markets.

The Trust continued to invest in conservation, education, engagement and fundraising activities, resulting in expenditure of £13.6m across the Group. Staff costs increased during the period due to inflationary pay pressures, growth in staffing levels to support the delivery of charitable activities and externally funded projects and increases in employer costs arising from changes to Government legislation, including higher employer National Insurance contributions.

Group net assets decreased from £31.1m to £29.4m at 31 March 2026. Cash balances increased to £2.6m (2024: £0.8m), reflecting the timing of grant receipts, legacy income, working capital movements and investment portfolio activity during the period. The Group continues to maintain a strong asset base, including land, buildings, investment properties and quoted investments.

Unrestricted funds closed at £9.2m (2024: £11.0m), whilst restricted funds totalled £19.4m (2024: £19.3m). Free reserves at 31 March 2026 were approximately £3.9m, remaining above the Trustees' minimum target level of £1.5m.

Financial reserves policy

Free reserves provide the working capital requirements of the charity, whilst providing a buffer of liquid funds in case of any short-term and substantial decline in income, unexpected increase in costs, or unexpected exposure to risk with financial consequences. The free reserves are especially intended to ensure that the Trust's considerable contractual obligations to staff, freehold and leasehold premises and funding partners can be met. Essex Wildlife Trust calculates its free reserves by deducting the unrestricted fixed asset balance and any designated funds from the general fund balance shown on the balance sheet (Note 24b).

The Trustees review the reserves policy annually and have adopted a risk-based approach in determining the free reserves level. This level has been calculated to be no less than £1.5m of which not less than half should be readily realisable.

The calculated free reserve figure of £3.9m (2024: £5.5m) is above the minimum level of £1.5m. The Trust is planning to operate a deficit budget for 2026/27; subsequent budget plans for 2027 onwards are to return to an operating break-even position.

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Financial review (continued)

Key 2024 2025/26

The comparative period covered 12 months to 31 December 2024 and is therefore not directly comparable to the current 15-month reporting period

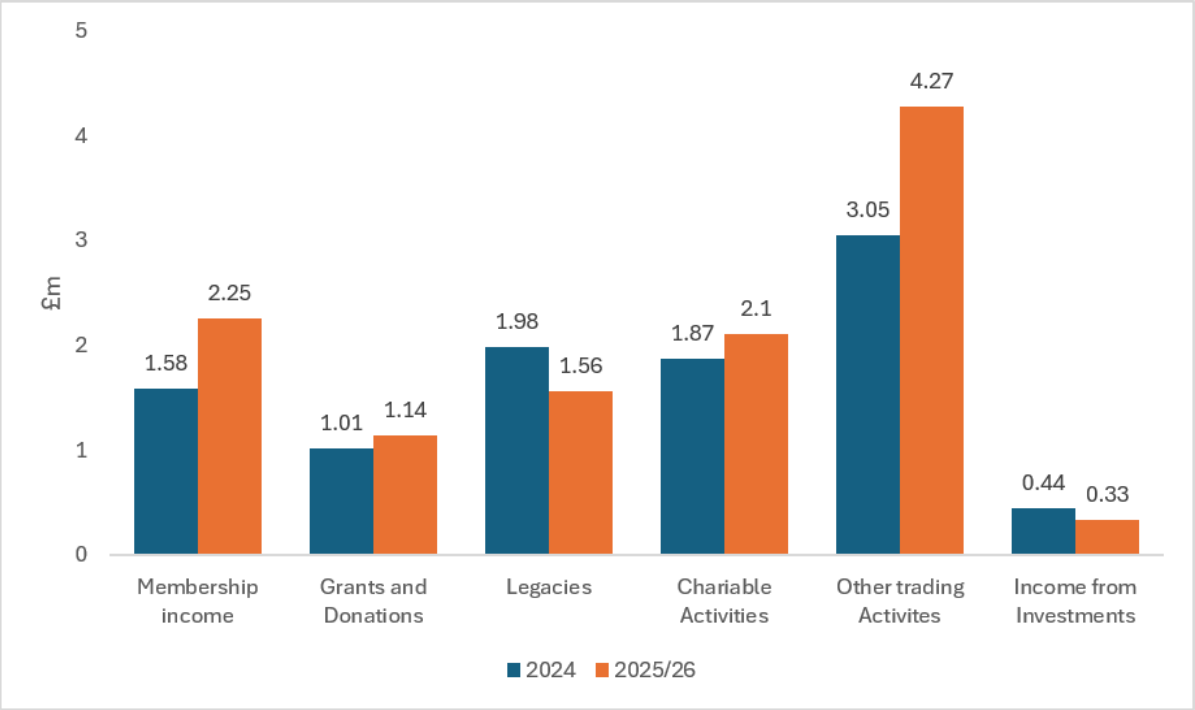
Income

Income performance remained resilient during the period despite continued economic uncertainty. Membership income continued to benefit from the support of the Trust's membership base, while trading income increased through strong visitor centre performance and growth within Essex Wildlife Sales Limited.

Grant and donation income also increased, reflecting funding secured for conservation and charitable activities.

Legacy income reduced compared with the prior period, reflecting the inherently unpredictable nature of this income stream.

Overall, Group income totalled £11.66m for the period.

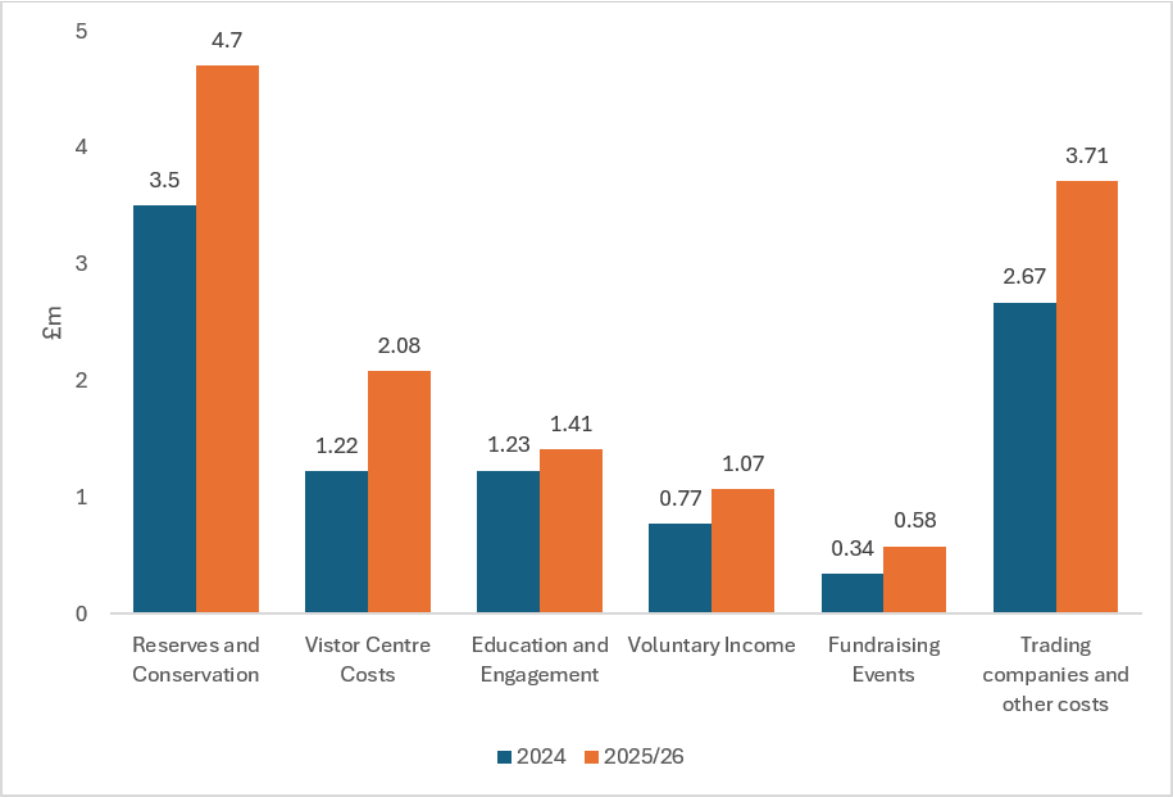


Expenditure

Expenditure increased from £9.73m in 2024 to £13.56m in 2025/26, reflecting both the extended 15-month reporting period and the Trust's continued investment in delivering its charitable objectives. Expenditure on charitable activities increased from £5.94m to £8.19m, reflecting higher levels of conservation, engagement and education activity across the county.

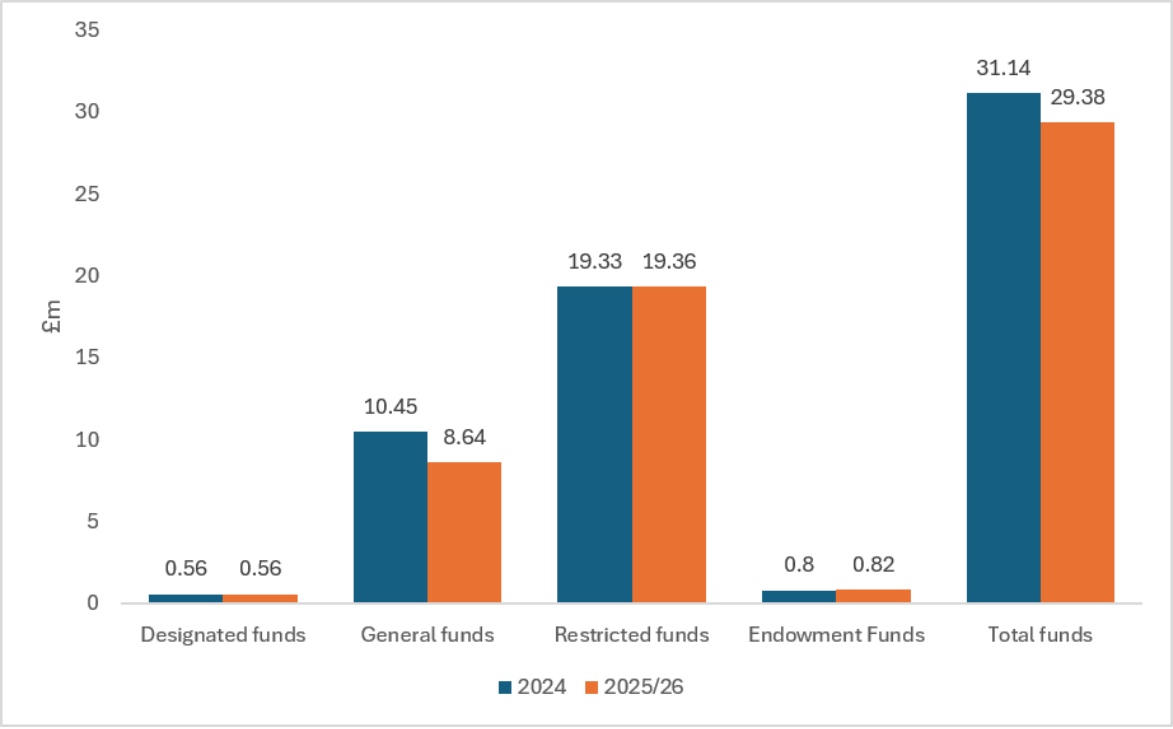
Expenditure on raising funds increased from £3.79m to £5.37m, driven principally by growth in trading operations and increased fundraising activity. Staff costs also increased due to inflationary pressures, investment in staffing capacity and additional employer costs arising from legislative changes.

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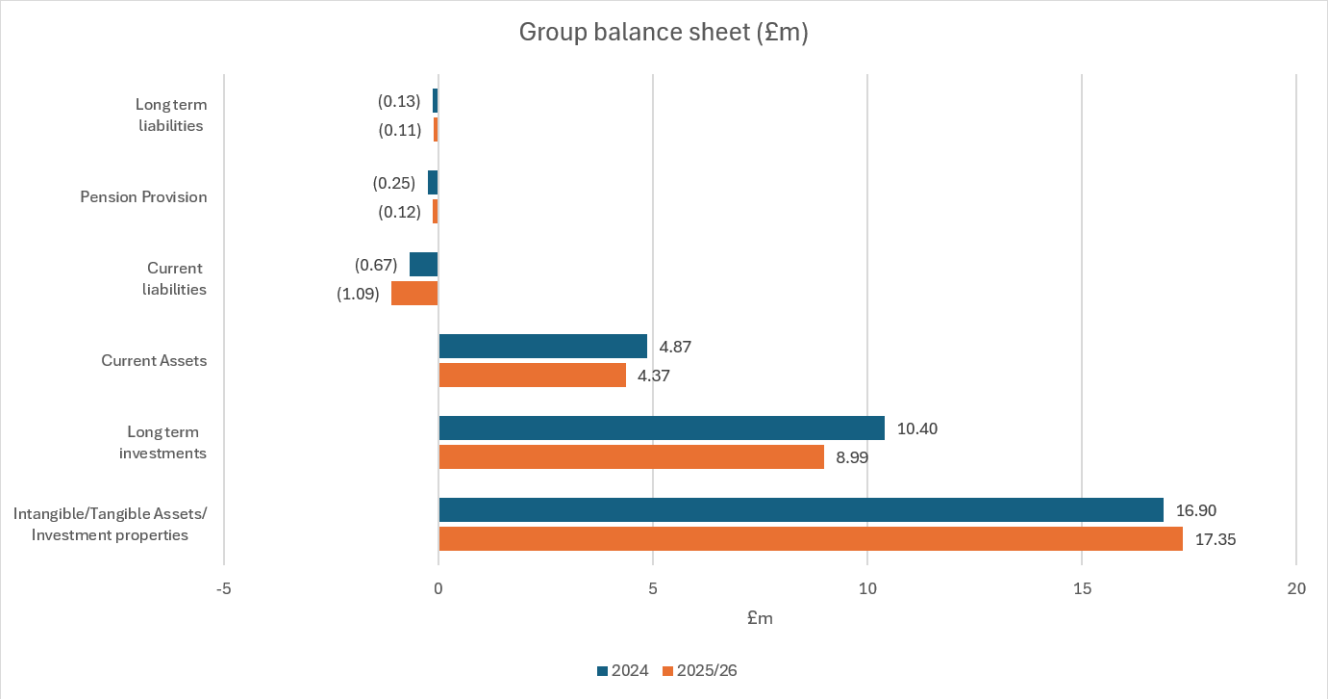
Total Funds

The Trust's total funds remained strong at £29.38m at 31 March 2026. The reduction from the previous year reflects the operational deficit reported during the period, together with significantly lower gains from investments and property valuations than those experienced in 2024. Whilst investment performance remained positive overall, these gains were insufficient to offset the impact of the operating deficit on total fund balances.



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Group Balance Sheet



Investment powers and policy

Under the terms of the Trust's Articles of Association, the charity has the power to invest in any way the Trustees deem to be appropriate and to the overall benefit of the Trust.

Following the adoption of new Articles of Association by the Membership at the AGM in 2013 & 2016, and changes to the methods used to manage the charity's investment portfolio, including the appointment of professional investment advisers, the Trustees agreed a new investment policy, which was reviewed during 2023.

In considering the investment policy, the Trustees place much emphasis on the need to invest in financial products that are considered to be ethical in nature having regard to the objects of the charity as well as investments that have strong environmental, social and governance credentials. To demonstrate the ethical requirements of the charity, as balanced against the need to ensure that the charity's investments generate income to contribute to the running costs of the charity, the salient parts of the investment policy are: -

The charity will:

- Use the income and capital generated through investment of its financial reserves to further the objectives of the charity;
- seek to make investments in companies with strong environmental, ethical, social and governance (ESG) credentials. It will do this by investing in companies and funds that meet these standards and it will avoid investments, whether direct or indirect, that do not have strong management of ESG risks and opportunities. This will include the following ethical restrictions:
- no investment in tobacco manufacturers and oil and gas companies, and
- the avoidance of investment in companies that earn more than 10% of their revenues from the following;
    - Alcohol manufacturing and retail
    - Armaments
    - Adult entertainment including pornography
    - Gambling
    - Fossil Fuels, including oil, gas, coal and tar sands, whether by exploration and extraction, production, distribution or power generation.

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The investment objective:

- For long-term reserves of the charity to achieve capital growth in excess of inflation over the long term, whilst generating an income to support the on-going activities of the charity;
- For the short-term reserves of the charity, to preserve their capital value with a minimum level of risk. Assets should be realisable without undue financial or performance penalty to meet unanticipated cash flow requirements.

In furtherance of this approach, the appropriateness of the Trust's investments in Sarasin's Climate Active Fund was reviewed against the updated investment policy and the Trust's investment management mandate was market tested during 2023. As a result, the investments were transferred to a bespoke investment portfolio managed by Greenbank Rathbones, this process was started in late 2023 and is now fully compliant with the policy.

Internal Financial Controls

The Trustees have overall responsibility for ensuring that the Trust has in place an appropriate system of controls, financial and otherwise, to provide reasonable assurance that:

- it is operating efficiently and effectively;
- its assets are safeguarded against unauthorised use or disposal;
- proper records are maintained, and financial information used within the Trust or for publication is reliable;
- it complies with relevant laws and regulations.

The Trustees are aware of the guidance CC8 called "Internal Financial Controls for Charities" published by the Charity Commission for England and Wales and are satisfied that the system of financial controls operated by the Trust during the year to which this report refers complied in all material aspects with the Commission's guidance.

These systems provide reasonable assurance against material misstatement or loss and include a strategic plan, a risk register, monthly management accounts and an annual budget. The documents, which are approved by the Trustees, enable the Trust to monitor the actual monthly results against the appropriate budgets to ensure that the authority delegated to the Executive by the Trustees is adhered to throughout the year.

The Trust needs to be sure that all of its dealings are conducted in a fair and open manner. Therefore, in line with the provisions of the Bribery Act 2010, the Trust has adopted a formal policy and has implemented systems for controlling and recording any gifts or benefits offered to our staff by companies or others.

Training for all existing staff took place when the Act was first introduced and the Trust's policy and procedures regarding bribery are incorporated in the induction of new staff. The contents of the policy are reviewed periodically, and a copy of the latest edition is readily available from the Trust's intranet system.

Risk management

Principal Risks & Uncertainties

We have fully reviewed and revised the approach to Risk Management, which is driven by a Corporate Risk Register that consists of key risks to delivering the Trust objectives and strategic aims. The Corporate Risk Register is the responsibility of the Board, and which is overseen by the senior management team and the leadership group.

Generally, whilst the risks faced by the Trust remain similar over the years, the Trustees and staff remain vigilant because external, as well as internal, circumstances change.

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The risk governance reporting structure now includes Corporate Risk Register in which risks are assessed with an initial impact and likelihood score, and a residual mitigated score. The risks are clearly defined and specific. The Corporate Risk Register is reviewed regularly by the senior and operational management teams as well as at the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

The impact scoring is assessed by finance, people, environment and reputation.

The risks are categorised into seven strategic headings:

	Strategic Risk	Description
1	Environment	Are conservation risks, both internally and externally, identified and managed?
2	Health and Safety	Are H&S working practices meeting all stakeholder and legal requirements?
3	Financial	Are the financial strategy and objectives being achieved?
4	Business Systems	Are systems secure from cyber risks and meeting operational requirements?
5	Commercial	Are the commercial strategy and objectives being achieved?
6	Operational	Are operational areas identified which could cause strategic concerns?
7	People	Are people effectively being managing to deliver strategic goals and objectives?

Each key risk within the Corporate Risk Register has an identified a lead and are working through the delivery of actions to address areas where improvement is necessary. These strategic risks form the framework that the Strategic Leadership Team uses.

Fundraising at Essex Wildlife Trust

Essex Wildlife Trust is committed to fundraising and communicating in an honest and transparent way. We rely on the generosity and enthusiasm of members and supporters to fund the majority of our work to protect wildlife and inspire the next generation to care for wildlife too.

Essex Wildlife Trust is registered with the Fundraising Regulator (FR), contributing the appropriate voluntary fee and adhering to its rules and guidance. The FR is responsible for investigating any complaints regarding charity fundraising. We continue to keep abreast of changes and recommendations and are committed to complying with all of these regulations. We also follow the Institute of Fundraising's Code of Practice and comply with the key principles embodied in this code.

Our approach to fundraising is that we are honest and transparent with our donors and supporters about where their money goes and why we ask for donations. We publish information widely about our work and communicate why we need donations and what they will be spent on.

Together with five other Wildlife Trusts, we are a stakeholder in a wholly-owned Wildlife Trust membership recruitment company, Wildlife Fundraising Central Limited. The company is managed by a Board of Trustees drawn from the relevant Wildlife Trusts and other experts. This company is transparent in its fundraising techniques, regulated by the Institute of Fundraising (IOF) and meets with its member Trusts every three months. There is a written agreement between all parties agreeing fundraising standards, monitoring of fundraisers and compliance. Other fundraisers are employed directly by Essex Wildlife Trust and managed as members of staff.

Essex Wildlife Trust is accountable regarding its fundraising. Essex Wildlife Trust monitors fundraising activity through regular reports to the Board of Trustees, based on our budgetary and management accounts process and policy.

All projects are approved and managed through the Strategic Leadership Team, with Board approval where appropriate. All of our projects and core fundraising contribute to Essex Wildlife Trust's strategy and overall

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vision – to have a county rich in wildlife with people connected to nature – with communities that value the countryside and that are inspired to help protect it.

Essex Wildlife Trust has a complaints policy and the procedure for making complaints regarding our fundraising can be found on our website, as a link under Essex Wildlife Trust's Fundraising Promise. Essex Wildlife Trust's policy regarding Vulnerable Adults and Treating Donors Fairly sets out how we expect our fundraisers to behave. Essex Wildlife Trust is respectful – we respect decisions not to make donations and to withdraw membership, we will contact our supporters and donors in the way that they request, we will respond to queries in an open, honest, courteous and professional way. We will acknowledge any complaint within five working days to let complainants know when they can expect a response.

Structure, governance and management

The Trust is governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association and is a company limited by guarantee with the number 00638666.

The Governing document

Essex Wildlife Trust Ltd is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 2nd October 1959, and governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association the latest versions of which were approved by Members at the Annual General Meeting held on 22 June 2013 and amended on September 10th 2016. The company has no issued or unissued share capital and the liability of each Member of the Trust in the event of winding up is limited to £1.

Essex Wildlife Trust was entered on the Register of Charities for England and Wales on 22nd September 1962.

Organisation

The Board of Trustees is responsible for determining the strategic direction of the Trust and for monitoring performance towards those set objectives. The Board meets formally on average at least 5 times per year, there is a Finance and Audit Committee which generally meets quarterly and advises the Board on financial matters.

A Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is appointed by the Trustees to manage the day-to-day operations of the charity. To facilitate effective operation, the CEO has delegated authority for operational matters, within the terms of delegation approved by the Trustees.

Appointment of Trustees

As set out in Clause 11.2 of the Articles of Association, the Chair of the Trustees is appointed by the Trustees from among their number. There is provision for up to 13 Trustees in total, one third of whom are elected annually by the members of the charitable company, either by post or by attending the Annual General Meeting. Trustees serve for a period of three years, with a maximum of nine years.

As set out in Clause 9 of the Articles of Association, one additional Trustee is appointed by resolution of the Trustees for the time being to take the role of the Treasurer for a term of three years.

The Trustees have the power to co-opt to fill a vacancy that occurs between AGMs. The co-opted Trustee must, however, stand down or be nominated for election at the next AGM. Following changes to the Articles approved by Members at the Annual General Meeting held on September 10th 2016, the Board is now able to appoint up to two trustees.

At the Annual General Meeting in each year, one third of the Members of the Board shall retire from office but shall be eligible for re-election. If the number of Members of the Board is not exactly divisible by three, the number of Members to retire shall be determined by rounding to the nearest whole number.

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The Members of the Board to retire at an Annual General Meeting shall be those who have served as such for the longest period since last re-election and where there is an equality of service the person to retire shall be determined by lot.

Induction and training of Board members

Trustees' skills are reviewed regularly to ensure that the balance is suitable. New Trustees are inducted into the charity by discussions between themselves and other Trustees, and members of staff, as opportunities arise. They are presented with background information and have access to the Charity Commission's website.

Statement of the Board of Trustee's responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also directors of Essex Wildlife Trust for the purposes of company law) 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).

Company law 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 charitable company and the group and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable group 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 charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and the group and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Finance & Audit Committee

The Trustees established the Finance & Audit Committee to take on a number of detailed financial matters in order to advise and make recommendations to the Board. The work of the committee continued during the year under review.

Key management personnel remuneration

The Trustees consider the Chief Executive and the Strategic Leadership Team as comprising the key management personnel of the charity, in charge of running and operating the charity on a day-to-day basis. All Trustees give of their time freely and no remuneration was received for trustee duties in the year. Details of trustee expenses and related party transactions are disclosed in notes 10 and 33 to the accounts.

Trustees are required to disclose all relevant interests and register them with the Chief Executive and in accordance with the Trust's policy, withdraw from decisions where a conflict of interest arises. Where the Trust or any of the Trustees have interests with the trading operations of the charity's trading subsidiaries, any such interests are disclosed.

Remuneration of key personnel In accordance with the agreed job evaluation framework and available benchmarking information, the Chief Executive has delegated authority to agree salaries. They will normally do so in conjunction with HR executives or, for Director level posts, with the input of key Trustees. The Chief Executive's own salary is set by the Chair and Honorary Officers.

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Relationship with the charity and related parties including its subsidiaries

i) Other Wildlife Trusts

The charity is a member of The Wildlife Trusts that is registered as the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT) charity number 207238. RSWT acts as an umbrella body on behalf of all county Wildlife Trusts. County Wildlife Trusts have the use of The Wildlife Trusts' logo and benefit from their resources, best practice and experience. Membership gives the charity a national voice and profile. However, each member of the RSWT remains entirely independent in terms of governance and financial management.

ii) Subsidiary companies

The Trust has five subsidiaries, the principal activities of which are as follows: -

- Essex Wildlife Sales Limited (EWS) - The retail sale of goods and catering at various Trust Nature Discovery Centres and other venues throughout Essex.
- Essex Ecology Services Limited (EES) - The provision of advisory services relating to environmental matters.
- Essex BNG and Green Finance Limited (BNG) – The generation and sale of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) units to developers
- Chafford Gorges Limited - The conservation and maintenance of the area known as Chafford Gorges Nature Park in Thurrock.
- Thameside Nature Park Limited – The conservation and maintenance of the area known as Thurrock Thameside Nature Park adjacent to Mucking in Thurrock.

The Trust is also a Corporate Trustee of the Veolia Pitsea Marshes and Veolia Havering Riverside Maintenance Trusts. These Trusts ceased their grant-making activities and transferred any remaining funds to the Veolia Maintenance Trust in 2023. The Trusts were wound up in 2024.

Together with five other Wildlife Trusts, we are a stakeholder in a wholly owned Wildlife Trust membership recruitment company, Wildlife Fundraising Central Limited. The company is managed by a Board of Trustees drawn from the relevant Wildlife Trusts and other experts.

Statement as to disclosure of information to auditors

The members of the Board who were in office on the date of approval of these financial statements have confirmed, as far as they are aware, that there is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware. Each of the members of the Board have confirmed that they have taken all steps that they ought to have taken as members of the Board in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that it has been communicated to the auditor.

The Auditors

In accordance with the charity's articles, a resolution proposing that Moore Kingston Smith LLP be re-appointed as auditors will be put at an Annual General Meeting.

The Report of the Members of Board, which includes the Strategic Report on pages 2 to 18, were approved by the Board on 5 November 2026 and signed on their behalf:

On behalf of the Board

J Wren – Chair



Dated: 5 November 2026

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Independent auditor's report to the members of Essex Wildlife Trust Limited

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Essex Wildlife Trust Ltd (the 'parent company') for the period ended 31 March 2026 which comprise the Consolidated Statement of Income and Expenditure, the Consolidated and Charity Balance Sheets, the Consolidated Cash Flow Statement and notes to the consolidated financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

1. Give a true and fair view of the state of the groups and the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2026, and of the groups incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the period then ended;
2. Have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
3. Have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate. Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the group's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent

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material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.
We have nothing to report in this regard

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

1. The information given in the strategic report and the trustees' report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and

2. The strategic report and the trustees' report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and the parent company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report or the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- Adequate accounting records have not been kept by the parent company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- The parent company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- Certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- We have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 17, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the group's and the parent company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the group or the parent company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative to do so.

Auditor responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.
As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK) we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit.

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We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purposes of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the group and the parent company's internal control.

- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the trustees.

- Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the group and the parent company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the group or the parent company to cease to continue as a going concern.

- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

- Obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the entities or business activities within the group to express an opinion on the consolidated financial statements. We are responsible for the direction, supervision and performance of the group audit. We remain solely responsible for our audit opinion.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

The objectives of our audit in respect of fraud, are; to identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements due to fraud; to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the assessed risks of material misstatement due to fraud, through designing and implementing appropriate responses to those assessed risks; and to respond appropriately to instances of fraud or suspected fraud identified during the audit. However, the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with both management and those charged with governance of the company.

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Our approach was as follows:

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements applicable to the company and considered that the most significant are the Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, UK financial reporting standards as issued by the Financial Reporting Council, and UK taxation legislation.

- We obtained an understanding of how the company complies with these requirements by discussions with management and those charged with governance.

- We assessed the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements, including the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and how it might occur, by holding discussions with management and those charged with governance.

- We inquired of management and those charged with governance as to any known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations.

- Based on this understanding, we designed specific appropriate audit procedures to identify instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. This included making enquiries of management and those charged with governance and obtaining additional corroborative evidence as required.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above. We are less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that are not closely related to events and transactions reflected in the financial statements. Also, the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken for no purpose other than to draw to the attention of the company's members those matters which we are required to include in an auditor's report addressed to them. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to any party other than the company and company's members as a body, for our work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Paul Springfield (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of

Signed by:
Paul Springfield
255867703AE34BA...

Moore Kingston Smith LLP
Statutory Auditor

Orbital House,
20 Eastern Road,
Romford,
Essex,
RM1 3PJ

Date: 12/11/2026

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CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCORPORATING THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

	Notes	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total 2025/26	Total 2024
		£	£	£	£	£
Income and endowments from:						
Donations and legacies	**3**	3,994,955	958,638	-	4,953,593	4,591,908
Charitable activities	**4**	1,100,440	1,003,267	-	2,103,707	1,873,787
Other trading activities	**5**	4,261,873	10,752	-	4,272,625	3,049,367
Income from investments	**6**	207,522	104,107	20,465	332,094	437,974
Total Income		9,564,790	2,076,764	20,465	11,662,019	9,953,036
Expenditure on:						
Charitable activities	**7**	6,442,583	1,742,762	6,745	8,192,090	5,939,420
Raising Funds	**8**	5,229,105	137,325	271	5,366,701	3,785,592
Total Expenditure	**9**	11,671,688	1,880,087	7,016	13,558,791	9,725,012
Net (expenditure)/income		(2,106,898)	196,677	13,449	(1,896,772)	228,024
Transfer between funds		221,862	(221,862)	-	-	-
Other gains/(losses):						
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension scheme	**11**	103,792			103,792	18,375
Net gains/(losses) on investments	**16**	102,840	64,185	6,146	173,171	(212,871)
Unrealised (losses)/gains on investment properties		(140,000)	-	-	(140,000)	1,359,721
Net movement in funds	**24b**	(1,818,404)	39,000	19,595	(1,759,809)	1,393,249
Reconciliation of funds:						
Total funds brought forward		11,016,877	19,326,041	801,425	31,144,343	29,751,094
Total funds carried forward	**24**	9,198,473	19,365,041	821,020	29,384,534	31,144,343

The statement of financial activities contains all gains and losses for the period, and all activities relate to continuing operations. The profit for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006 is the net income before unrealised gains/(losses).

The detailed comparative information for the statement of financial activities is included at note 32.

The notes on pages 27 to 60 form part of these financial statements.

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CONSOLIDATED AND CHARITY BALANCE SHEETS
AS AT 31 MARCH 2026

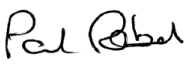
		Group		Charity	
		2025/26	2024	2025/26	2024
	Notes	£	£	£	£
Fixed Asset					
Intangible assets	13	-	5,700	-	5,700
Tangible assets	14	15,999,132	15,400,955	15,219,976	14,784,578
Investment Properties	15	1,350,000	1,490,000	1,350,000	1,490,000
Long Term Investments	16	8,989,199	10,424,058	5,308,727	6,468,892
Total fixed assets		26,338,331	27,320,713	21,878,703	22,749,170
Current assets					
Stocks		427,067	395,699	158,275	152,367
Debtors	17	1,211,207	2,693,901	1,970,280	3,249,313
Short Term Investments	18	92,852	963,702	41,268	940,769
Cash at bank and in hand		2,641,881	818,744	1,876,511	543,953
Total current assets		4,373,007	4,872,046	4,046,334	4,886,402
Liabilities					
Creditors:					
Amounts falling due within one year	19	(1,091,794)	(665,014)	(1,079,874)	(826,159)
Net current assets		3,281,213	4,207,032	2,966,460	4,060,243
Creditors:					
Amounts falling due after one year	20	(112,500)	(128,125)	(112,500)	(128,125)
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	11	(122,510)	(255,277)	(122,510)	(255,277)
Total net assets		29,384,534	31,144,343	24,610,153	26,426,011
The funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds	21	556,756	564,606	556,756	564,606
General funds		8,641,717	10,452,271	9,159,165	10,831,173
		9,198,473	11,016,877	9,715,921	11,395,779
Restricted funds	22	19,365,041	19,326,041	14,073,212	14,228,807
Endowment funds	23	821,020	801,425	821,020	801,425
Total funds	24	29,384,534	31,144,343	24,610,153	26,426,011

These accounts were approved by the Board and authorised for issue on 5 November 2026

A separate Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) is not presented because the charitable company has taken advantage of the exemptions afforded by section 408 of Companies Act 2006.

The net movement in funds for the parent charity was a deficit of £1,815,858 (2024: surplus of £1,155,235).





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J Wren – Chair P Roberts – Treasurer

The notes on pages 27 to 60 form part of these financial statements.
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CONSOLIDATED CASH FLOW STATEMENT
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

	2025/26 £	2025/26 £	2024 £	2024 £
Cash flows from operating activities:				
Net cash generated by operating activities		541,787		38,911
Cash flows from investing activities:				
Dividends and interest	332,094		437,974	
Proceeds from sale of fixed assets	3,050		-	
Purchase of fixed assets	(1,431,797)		(940,036)	
Proceeds from the sale of investments	4,339,974		13,395,663	
Purchase of investments	(2,832,821)		(12,184,664)	
Net cash provided by investing activities		410,500		708,937
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		952,287		747,848
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		1,782,446		1,034,598
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		2,734,733		1,782,446

Reconciliation of net income to net cash inflow from operating activities

	2025/26 £	2024 £
Net (expenditure)/income for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	(1,759,809)	1,393,249
Depreciation/amortisation	838,455	622,584
(Gains)/losses on investments	(72,294)	890,969
Losses/(gains) on investment properties	140,000	(1,359,721)
Pension deficit movement	(132,767)	(48,722)
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	(332,094)	(437,974)
(Profit)/loss on the sale of fixed assets	(2,185)	279
(Increase)/Decrease in stock	(31,368)	1,202
Decrease/(Increase) in debtors	1,482,694	(653,543)
Increase/(Decrease) in creditors	411,155	(369,412)
Net cash Inflow from operating activity	541,787	38,911

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CONSOLIDATED CASH FLOW STATEMENT
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2025/26	2024
	£	£
Deposits on less than 3 months' notice	92,852	963,702
Cash at bank and in hand	2,641,881	818,744
Total cash and cash equivalents	2,734,733	1,782,446

Analysis of changes in net debt

	Balance 1 Jan 2025	Cash Flows	Balance 31 Mar 26
	£	£	£
Deposits on less than 3 months' notice	963,702	(870,850)	92,852
Cash at bank and in hand	818,744	1,823,137	2,641,881
Total	**1,782,446**	**952,287**	**2,734,733**

	Balance 1 Jan 2024	Cash Flows	Balance 31 Dec 2024
	£	£	£
Deposits on less than 3 months' notice	244,838	718,864	963,702
Cash at bank and in hand	789,760	28,984	818,744
Total	**1,034,598**	**787,848**	**1,782,446**

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1. Accounting policies

Company information

Essex Wildlife Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales, which meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. The company is domiciled and incorporated in England and Wales, the registered office is Abbotts Hall Farm, Great Wigborough, Colchester, Essex, CO5 7RZ.

1.1 Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, with the exception of listed investments and investment properties which are included at their market value. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 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 effective 1 January 2019 (The FRS 102 Charities SORP), the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements are prepared in Sterling, which is the functional currency of the charitable company. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest pound.

The Trustees confirm that the Charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

The financial statements cover a period of fifteen months to 31 March 2026. The comparative figures relate to the year ended 31 December 2024 and are therefore not directly comparable.

1.2 Group Accounts

The Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) and Balance Sheet consolidate the financial statements of the charity and its subsidiary undertakings. The results of the subsidiaries are consolidated on a line-by-line basis.

1.3 Fund Accounting: -

Unrestricted Funds: These funds can be used for any of the charity's purposes.

Restricted Income Funds: These funds have been given to the Trust for a particular purpose to be used in accordance with the wishes of the donor.

Endowment funds: These funds have been given to the Trust for a particular purpose to be used in accordance with the wishes of the donor. The capital is normally required to be retained and may not be spent without the relevant authority.

Designated funds - Projects: These funds were set aside by the Trustees for specific projects. Many of these projects are partly funded from restricted funds with the unfunded element set aside from general funds.

1.4 Income

Income from investments, Gift Aid and deeds of covenant is included gross, and is accounted for when it is receivable or the charity's right to it becomes legally enforceable. Provision has been made for Income Tax reclaimable at the year-end but not yet received.

Legacy income is included in the accounts when the amount due can be quantified with reasonable certainty and it is probable that it will be received. Receipt is normally probable when there has been grant of probate,

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the estate has sufficient assets to pay the legacy and any conditions attached are either within the control of the charity or have been met.

Grants receivable including government grants are accounted for when there is sufficient information to enable the claim to be made or the claim has been made and there is clear indication to suggest the claim will be met.

Income from Donations is accounted for on a receipts basis.

1.5 **Membership Income**

Membership income is taken to the Statement of Financial Activities over the life of the subscription, taking into account the type of membership involved.

1.6 **Volunteer Help**

The Trust receives support from a wide variety of volunteers. It is not practical to place a value on the time volunteered by all these persons, due to the variety of duties performed, the differences in time spent, and the sheer number of volunteers who gave of their time.

1.7 **Expenditure**

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and liabilities are recognised as resources expended as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the Charity to the expenditure.

Indirect costs are allocated to the expenditure headings in the SOFA on the basis of the number of employees in each area of work.

Cost of Raising Funds consists of expenditure relating to appeals, communications requesting funds, applying for grants and other general publicity as part of fundraising together with associated support activities and cost of sales.

Administration and Support of charitable activities consists of those costs incurred in support of expenditure on the objects of the charity. These include the provision of the premises, personnel, information technology and audit fees.

1.8 **Finance and operating leases**

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged to the SOFA over the period in which the cost is incurred. The Trust has no finance leases.

1.9 **Irrecoverable VAT**

The charity and its subsidiaries are partially exempt. Irrecoverable VAT is allocated to the appropriate cost categories.

1.10 **Land**

Interest in land purchased by the Trust including expenditure on capital projects is stated at cost. Land in joint ownership is also stated at cost. Land gifted to the Trust since 1st January 1993 is accounted for at valuation at the date the gift was made.

The charity has been unable to allocate historic costs for freehold land and long leasehold land to specific properties and accordingly the total cost cannot be analysed between the two different types of interest.

No value is attributable to land given to the Trust before 1st January 1993 nor are changes in the value of land after its acquisition recognised.

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1.11 **Heritage assets**

The Charity's objects include the conservation of nature for the purpose of study and research and to educate the public in understanding and appreciation of nature, the awareness of its value and the need for its conservation. As such the Charity owns and maintains a number of nature reserves that fall into the definition of heritage assets in accordance with FRS 102. These assets, when purchased other than gifted, have been capitalised at cost at the date of acquisition, and being land in nature have not been depreciated.

These assets have been included within tangible fixed assets and not separately disclosed as the information on their cost or valuation is not available and such information cannot be obtained at a cost commensurate with the benefit to the users of the financial statements and to the Charity.

The costs of maintaining the heritage assets are expensed through the Statement of Financial Activities as incurred, as part of the Trust's charitable activities.

1.12 **Amortisation**

Amortisation is provided at the following rates in order to write off the cost of each asset over its estimated useful life.

Computer software	33⅓% on cost p.a.

1.13 **Depreciation**

Depreciation is not provided on freehold land which is considered to have a useful life of more than fifty years. Assets in the course of construction are not depreciated.

Moveable assets over £1,000 are capitalised. Tangible fixed assets other than freehold land are stated at cost less depreciation.

Depreciation is provided at the following rates in order to write off the cost of each asset over its estimated useful life.

Buildings	2% on cost p.a.
Abbotts Hall offices	1½% on cost p.a.
Office equipment	33⅓% on cost p.a.
Plant and Equipment	10% to 20% on cost p.a.

1.14 **Investments**

Investments are stated at market value, except investments in subsidiary undertakings which are held at cost. It is the Trust's policy to keep valuations up to date such that when investments are sold, there is no gain or loss arising relating to the previous year. As a result, the SOFA includes those unrealised gains and losses arising from the revaluation of the investment portfolio at the year end. Disclosure is made in the notes to the accounts of the difference between historic cost and sale proceeds of investments sold during the year.

1.15 **Stocks**

Stocks are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

Livestock held for conservation management purposes are valued at market value at the balance sheet date. Any gains or losses arising from changes in valuation are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities

1.16 **Pension costs**

The Trust operates a defined contribution scheme for the benefit of all of its employees. The costs of the defined contributions are written off against incoming resources in the year they are payable. The assets of the scheme are held separately from the Trust in independently administered funds. The majority of the

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employees are members of a money purchase policy, which was set up to meet the government's requirements regarding pension provisions for all staff. Contributions to the policy made on behalf of employees are also charged against incoming resources in the year they are paid.

The Trust is also a member of the Wildlife Trust Pension Scheme (WTPS) which is a hybrid scheme whose defined benefits section is in deficit. The scheme was closed to new members and future accrual on 30 September 2005.

Under defined benefit accounting the Scheme assets are measured at fair value. Scheme liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method and are discounted at appropriate high quality corporate bond rates. The net surplus or deficit is presented separately from other net assets on the Statement of Financial Position. The current service cost and costs from settlements and curtailments are charged to operating surplus. Past service costs are recognised in the current reporting period. Interest is calculated on the net defined benefit liability. Re-measurements are reported in Other gains/(losses) on the Statement of Financial Activities.

1.17 **Going concern**

Having reviewed the Charity and Group's financial forecasts and expected future cashflows, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the group has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and for a period of at least 12 months following the approval of these financial statements. Thus, the going concern basis has been adopted in preparing the group statements for the period ended 31 March 2026.

1.18 **Financial assets**

The Charitable Company has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Basic financial assets, which include trade and other receivables and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method, unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Other financial assets classified as fair value through profit or loss are measured at fair value. They are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Impairment of financial assets

Financial assets, other than those held at fair value through profit and loss, are assessed for indicators of impairment at each reporting end date.

Financial assets are impaired where there is objective evidence that, as a result of one or more events that occurred after the initial recognition of the financial asset, the estimated future cash flows have been affected. The impairment loss is recognised in profit or loss.

1.19 **Financial liabilities**

Basic financial liabilities are initially measured at transaction price, unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Other financial liabilities classified as fair value through profit or loss are measured at fair value. They are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

1.20 **Cash and cash equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

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2 **Critical accounting estimates and judgements**

In the application of the charitable company'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, if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

Key sources of estimation uncertainty

Useful economic lives of intangible fixed assets

The annual amortisation charge for intangible fixed assets is sensitive to changes in the estimated useful economic lives and residual values of the assets. The useful economic lives and residual values are re-assessed annually. See note 13 for the carrying amount of the intangible fixed assets and note 1 for the useful economic lives for each class of asset.

Useful economic lives of tangible fixed assets

The annual depreciation charge for tangible fixed assets is sensitive to changes in the estimated useful economic lives and residual values of the assets. The useful economic lives and residual values are re-assessed annually. They are amended when necessary to reflect current estimates, based on technological advancement, future investments, economic utilisation and the physical condition of the assets. See note 14 for the carrying amount of the tangible fixed assets and note 1 for the useful economic lives for each class of asset.

Defined benefit pension scheme

Management's estimate of the defined benefit pension obligation is based on a number of critical underlying assumptions such as standard rates of inflation, mortality and discount rate. Variation in these assumptions may significantly impact the defined benefit obligation amount and the annual defined benefit expenses (as analysed in Note 11).

Legacy Income Recognition

In accordance with the accounting policy detailed in Note 1.4, the calculation of Legacy Income is based on all information available to the charity. This is usually information that has been provided by executors in the form of estate accounts, the nature of these accounts can still include estimated amounts, particularly where property values are yet to be fully realised.

The amount of income recognised, is therefore a management estimate based upon all information available, but is sensitive to events that are outside of the charity's control. This variability is mitigated by reviewing all outstanding legacy files on a monthly basis to ensure the most up to date information is reflected in these values, including a final view just before the final accounts are signed.

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3 **Income - Donations and legacies**

	Unrestricted Income	Restricted Income	Endowment	2025/6	2024
	£	£	£	£	£
Membership income	2,152,010	102,250	-	2,254,260	1,582,199
Grants and donations	327,245	811,932	-	1,139,177	1,012,323
Legacies	1,515,700	44,456	-	1,560,156	1,997,386
	3,994,955	958,638	-	4,953,593	4,591,908

The 2024 comparative figures include £2,750,830 unrestricted income. Restricted Income for 2024 was £1,841,078 – Membership £69,000, Grants and donations £746,266 and Legacies £1,025,812.

4 **Income - Charitable activities**

	Unrestricted income	Restricted income	Endowment	2025/26	2024
	£	£	£	£	£
Reserves management	395,957	193,456	-	589,413	475,624
Education and Engagement	323,133	-	-	323,133	318,991
Conservation grants	380,850	785,695	-	1,166,545	1,061,537
Local groups	500	24,116	-	24,616	17,635
	1,100,440	1,003,267	-	2,103,707	1,873,787

The 2024 comparative figures include £1,159,243 unrestricted income. Restricted Income for 2024 was £714,544 – Reserves Management £108,071, Education and Engagement £nil, Conservation grants £583,547 and Local groups £22,926.

5 **Income - Other trading activities**

	Unrestricted income	Restricted income	Endowment	2025/26	2024
	£	£	£	£	£
Trading company - EECOS	59,057	-	-	59,057	85,995
Trading company - EWS	4,178,974	-	-	4,178,974	2,935,834
Trading company - BNG	1,666	-	-	1,666	-
Fundraising events	22,176	10,752	-	32,928	27,538
	4,261,873	10,752	-	4,272,625	3,049,367

The 2024 comparative figures include £3,034,976 unrestricted income. Restricted Income for 2024 was £14,391 from fundraising events.

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6 Income from investments

	Unrestricted income £	Restricted income £	Endowment £	2025/26 £	2024 £
Dividends received	155,508	86,785	-	242,293	321,554
Interest received	52,014	17,322	20,465	89,801	116,420
	207,522	104,107	20,465	332,094	437,974

The 2024 comparative figures include £299,849 unrestricted income. Restricted Income for 2024 was £117,421 – Dividends received £96,484 and Interest received £20,937. Endowment Income £20,704 from interest received.

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7 **Expenditure on Charitable Activities**

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Totals 2025/26	2024
	£	£	£	£	£
Reserves and Conservation	3,313,623	1,384,191	6,030	4,703,844	3,495,488
Visitor centres' costs	1,933,357	143,011	345	2,076,713	1,215,433
Education and Engagement	1,195,603	215,560	370	1,411,533	1,228,499
	6,442,583	1,742,762	6,745	8,192,090	5,939,420

The 2024 comparative figures include £4,732,174 unrestricted expenditure. Restricted Expenditure for 2024 was £1,166,689 - Reserves and Conservation £1,069,738, Visitor centres' costs £(59,783), Education and Engagement £156,734. Endowment expenditure for 2024 was £40,557 - Reserves and Conservation £29,913, Visitor centres' costs £4,942 and Education and Engagement £5,702.

8 **Expenditure on fundraising**

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Totals 2025/26	2024
	£	£	£	£	£
Costs of generating funds:					
Voluntary income	992,694	81,930	271	1,074,895	773,892
Activities for raising funds:					
Fundraising events	547,456	32,442	-	579,898	341,403
Trading company - EES	92,231	-	-	92,231	164,061
Trading company – EWS	3,466,167	-	-	3,466,167	2,471,448
Trading company - BNG	84,596			84,596	-
Investment management	45,961	22,953	-	68,914	34,788
	5,229,105	137,325	271	5,366,701	3,785,592

The 2024 comparative figures include £3,724,324 unrestricted expenditure. Restricted Expenditure for 2024 was £57,847 - Voluntary income £40,660 and Fundraising events £17,187. Endowment Expenditure for 2024 was £3,421 Voluntary income.

9 **Total expenditure**

-Allocations as Notes 9(i)	Direct costs	Support costs	Totals 2025/26	Direct costs	Support costs	Totals 2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Expenditure on Charitable activities:						
Reserves and Conservation	2,762,794	1,941,050	4,703,844	2,109,210	1,386,278	3,495,488
Visitor centres' costs	1,379,926	696,787	2,076,713	728,363	487,070	1,215,433
Education and Engagement	664,975	746,558	1,411,533	666,495	562,004	1,228,499
Expenditure on raising funds	4,819,225	547,476	5,366,701	3,448,390	337,202	3,785,592
	9,626,920	3,931,871	13,558,791	6,952,458	2,772,554	9,725,012

The Charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the Charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories

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covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes

Total resources expended are stated after charging:		**2025/26**	**2024**
		£	**£**
Auditors' remuneration - (Moore Kingston Smith)	Audit	72,140	52,500
-	Other services	3,678	3,400
Auditors' remuneration - (Price Bailey)	Audit	-	5,420
	Other services	-	1,594
Depreciation/amortisation		838,455	622,584
Cost of stocks recognised as an expense		1,550,009	1,132,229
(Profit)/loss on disposal of fixed assets		(2,185)	279

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9(i) Allocation of General Support costs

The breakdown of general support costs and how these were allocated between charitable and fundraising activities is shown in the tables below.
Support costs are allocated to the expenditure headings in the SOFA on the basis of the number of full time equivalent employees in each area of work.

	Total Support costs allocated for the period to 31 March 2026	Allocation			
		Reserves and conservation	Visitor centre costs	Education and Engagement	Activities for fundraising
	£	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
Indirect staff costs	2,099,042	1,036,236	371,982	398,552	292,272
Office costs	1,012,808	499,994	179,485	192,305	141,024
Insurance premiums	151,792	74,935	26,900	28,821	21,136
Bank charges/(credits)	18,090	8,930	3,206	3,435	2,519
Telephone	23,947	11,822	4,244	4,547	3,334
Information technology	253,385	125,089	44,904	48,111	35,281
RSWT contribution	193,731	95,640	34,332	36,784	26,975
Professional fees	179,076	88,404	31,734	34,003	24,935
Total General Support allocations 2025/26	**3,931,871**	**1,941,050**	**696,787**	**746,558**	**547,476**
Full time equivalent staff for 2025/26	79	39	14	15	11

	Total Support costs allocated for the period to 31 December 2024	Allocation			
		Reserves and conservation	Visitor centre costs	Education and Engagement	Activities for fundraising
	£	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
Indirect staff costs	1,394,780	697,390	245,029	282,726	169,635
Office costs	537,340	268,670	94,398	108,920	65,352
Insurance premiums	130,600	65,300	22,943	26,473	15,884
Bank charges/(credits)	14,463	7,231	2,541	2,932	1,759
Telephone	38,871	19,435	6,829	7,879	4,728
Information technology	149,375	74,687	26,242	30,279	18,167
RSWT contribution	142,030	71,015	24,951	28,790	17,274
Professional fees	365,095	182,548	64,139	74,006	44,402
Total General Support allocations 2024	**2,772,554**	**1,386,276**	**487,072**	**562,005**	**337,201**
Full time equivalent staff for 2024	74	37	13	15	9

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10 **Staff costs**

	2025/26	2024
	£	£
Salaries and wages	5,946,046	4,509,736
Social security costs	673,697	384,981
Other pension costs	272,363	202,017
	6,892,106	5,096,734

Redundancy payments of £14,962 were made in 2025/26 (2024: £101,620) were made to staff in accordance with their statutory entitlement, including any statutory amounts relating to pay in lieu of notice (PILON) where paid.

4 ex gratia payments were made to members of staff in 2026 of £40,000 (2024: £58,548) as a result of a settlement agreement as agreed by the board of Trustees.

Employees and volunteers

The average number of employees analysed by function is represented as a number of employees and was:

	2025/26		**2024**	
	No.	**FTE**	**No.**	**FTE**
Education and Engagement	21	15	20	15
Landscape conservation	42	40	41	37
Central support	25	23	23	21
Fundraising, membership and marketing	23	19	19	17
Centre management	33	14	30	13
Nature Discovery Centres	56	37	70	33
	200	148	203	136

The Trust relies on volunteers to help in all aspects of our work particularly for practical conservation work, administration and fundraising. It has not been possible to place a value on the work carried out by volunteers but were it possible, the amount would be significant.

Board's and employees' emoluments

Costs incurred by the Board travelling on Trust business and reimbursed to them amounted to £nil (2024: £nil). The number of Board members reimbursed during the period was nil (2024: nil).

During the year, no Trustees received any remuneration or other benefits.

The number of employees whose annual emoluments were £60,000 or more were:

	2025/26	**2024**
£60,000-£69,999	-	-
£70,000-£79,999	-	1
£80,000-£89,999	3	2
£90,000-£99,999	-	1
£100,000-£109,999	1	-
£110,000-£119,999	1	-

Total remuneration of the 5 (2024: 5) members of the senior management team - these being the Trust's key management personnel - in the period was £485,727 (2024: £395,236).

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11 Pension arrangements

The Trust participates in two pension schemes; one is the Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme (WTPS) a multi-employer scheme for the benefit of the staff of the wildlife trusts throughout the United Kingdom. The second scheme was created in 2014 to meet the requirements of the Auto Enrolment pensions legislation so that all staff have access to a pension scheme. The pension arrangements in place for all staff incorporate Life Assurance cover of not less than three times their basic salary.

During 2025/6 the contributions for the staff pension scheme amounted to £272,363 (2024: £202,017).

The WTPS has two sections, the Defined Benefit section (DB) and the Defined Contribution section (DC). The Trust's membership of the Scheme consists of past and present members of Essex Wildlife Trust staff, of which six are in the DB section and 42 are in the DC section. The DB section was closed to new members and future accrual on 30 September 2005. But as the Scheme carried a funding deficit at the date of closure, and a funding deficit has been declared at each actuarial valuation since, the Trust must continue to contribute to the pension fund along with the other wildlife trust employers in the Scheme.

Essex Wildlife Trust continues with its financial planning based on the deficit shown by the actuarial valuation of the Scheme as at 31 March 2019. The Trust has continued to make deficit recovery payments that are being recovered from the 12 participating employers over the 10 years to 2026 or until the deficit is neutralised, if sooner in accordance with the deficit recovery plan agreed after the 2019 actuarial valuation.

The formal valuation carried out in 2022 has shown reduced deficit in the scheme compared with the 2019 valuation. This was as a result of higher investment returns and employer contributions. Payments will continue in accordance with the current arrangements of contributions, to fund the deficit position.

During the year ended 31 March 2022, the trustees of the charity were made aware of a potential issue relating to the defined benefit section of the Wildlife Trust Pension Scheme. This process is finalising and has resulted in financial liability to employers who participated in that section, this liability was provided within the 2023 accounts of £332k. The payments to those impacted started in 2025.

The most recent FRS 102 valuation, as at 31 March 2026, showed a funding deficit of £123k (2024; £255k).

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11 **Pension arrangements** (continued)

Principal assumptions

	At 31 March 2026	At 31 December 2024
	per annum	**per annum**
Discount rate	6.15%	5.50%
Retail Prices Index (RPI) Inflation	3.50%	3.35%
Consumer Prices Index (CPI) Inflation	2.75%	2.80%
Future increases to deferred pensions	2.75%	2.80%
Rate of increase to pensions in payment:		
Fixed 5% pa	5.00%	5.00%
RPI max 5% pa	3.30%	3.20%
Mortality (before and after retirement)	Males: 96% of S3PA Females: 95% of S3PA CMI_2024 with a long term rate of improvements of 1.25% pa; Initial addition to mortality improvements of 0.5%.	Males: 96% of S3PA Females: 95% of S3PA CMI_2023 with a long term rate of improvements of 1.25% pa; Initial addition to mortality improvements of 0.5% and w2023 of 15%.
Cash commutation	Members assumed to take 25% of their pension as tax free cash, subject to HMRC restrictions, using cash commutation factors currently in force	Members assumed to take 25% of their pension as tax free cash, subject to HMRC restrictions, using cash commutation factors currently in force.
Life expectancy of a male aged 65 at the Balance Sheet Date	22.6	22.3
Life expectancy of a male aged 65 in 20 years from the Balance Sheet date	23.9	23.6
Life expectancy of a female aged 65 at the Balance Sheet Date	24.9	24.8
Life expectancy of a female aged 65 in 20 years from the Balance Sheet Date	26.3	26.2

For the avoidance of doubt, the financial assumptions above are in absolute terms. They are single equivalent rates, however in practice full yield curves are used.

Asset breakdown

The major categories of Scheme assets as a percentage of total Scheme assets are:

	At 31 March 2026	At 31 December 2024
4UK Equities	0.0%	0.0%
Overseas Equities	21.5%	27.6%
Diversified Growth Funds	8.7%	15.6%
UK Government Fixed Interest Bonds	0.0%	0.0%
UK Government Index Linked Bonds	0.0%	0.0%
UK Corporate Bonds	9.3%	9.8%
Alternatives	3.5%	2.8%
Cash	17.0%	17.9%
LDI	40.0%	26.3%
Total	**100.00%**	**100.00%**

The pension scheme has not invested in any of Essex Wildlife Trust's own financial instruments, nor in properties or other assets used by Essex Wildlife Trust. The assets are all quoted in active markets.

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11 **Pension arrangements** (continued)

Net defined benefit asset (liability)

	At 31 March 2026 £'s	At 31 December 2024 £'s
Fair value of Scheme assets	677,173	645,705
Present value of defined benefit obligation	799,683	900,982
Defined benefit asset/(liability) recognised in balance sheet	**(122,510)**	**(255,277)**

Total expense recognised in the SOFA

	At 31 March 2026 £'s	At 31 December 2024 £'s
Current service cost	-	-
Administration expenses	30,711	25,702
Past service costs including curtailments	-	324,156
Effect of settlements	-	-
Recognised in arriving at operating profit	**30,711**	**349,858**
Interest on the net defined benefit liability	16,389	(1,741)
Total recognised in the SOFA	**47,100**	**348,117**

Total amounts taken to Other Comprehensive Income

	At 31 March 2026 £'s	At 31 December 2024 £'s
Actual return on Scheme assets - gains and (losses)	54,619	68,666
less: amounts included in net interest on the net defined benefit liability	49,173	(50,291)
Remeasurement gains and (losses) **- Return on Scheme assets excluding interest income**	**103,792**	**18,375**
Remeasurement gains and (losses) - actuarial gains and (losses)	-	-
Remeasurement gain/(loss) recognised in Other Comprehensive Income	**103,792**	**18,375**

Changes in the present value of the defined benefit obligation

	At 31 March 2026 £'s	At 31 December 2024 £'s
Present value of defined benefit obligation at beginning of period	**900,982**	**979,499**
Benefits paid including expenses	(105,992)	(30,776)
Current service cost	-	-
Administration costs	-	(7,844)
Interest cost	59,312	28,769
Remeasurement (gains) and losses - actuarial (gains) and losses	(54,619)	(68,666)
Employee contributions	-	-
Past service costs including curtailments	-	-
Effect of settlements	-	-
Present value of defined benefit obligation at end of period	**799,683**	**900,982**

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11 **Pension arrangements** (continued)

Changes in the fair value of assets

	At 31 March 2026 £'s	At 31 December 2024 £'s
Fair value of Scheme assets at beginning of period	**645,705**	**675,500**
Interest income	42,923	30,510
Administration expenses	(30,711)	(25,702)
Remeasurement gains and (losses) - Return on scheme assets excluding interest income	49,173	(50,291)
Contributions by Employer	76,075	46,464
Employee contributions	-	-
Benefits paid including expenses	(105,992)	(30,776)
Fair value of Scheme assets at end of period	**677,173**	**645,705**

12 **Funders**

Essex Wildlife Trust is extremely grateful for the grants which have been received during 2025/26 from the following funders:

- Sharegift
- Essex and Suffolk Water
- Sea Changers
- Maldon District Council
- Fowler Smith and Jones Trust
- Biffa Award
- Southend Council
- Natural England
- Dedham Vale National Landscape
- Suffolk & Essex Coasts & Heaths National Landscape
- Chelmsford City Council
- Enovert Community Trust
- Stansted Airport Ltd
- The Swire Charitable Trust
- Big Chalk
- The Office for Zero Emission Vehicles
- Joyce Fletcher Foundation
- National Archives
- D H Currie Memorial Trust
- Chapman Charitable Trust
- Veolia Environmental Trust
- Essex Community Foundation

This list is not exhaustive. Essex Wildlife Trust is very grateful to all its generous funders.

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13 Intangible assets – Group and charity

	Computer software 2025/26 £	Total 2025/26 £
Cost or donated value		
1 January 2025	51,862	51,862
At 31 March 2026	51,862	51,862
Amortisation		
1 January 2025	46,162	46,162
Charge for the period	5,700	5,700
At 31 March 2026	51,862	51,862
Net book value		
At 31 March 2026	-	-
At 31 December 2024	5,700	5,700

14 Tangible assets – Group

	Freehold & leasehold land £	Freehold buildings £	Office equipment £	Plant, equipment & external works £	Total £
Cost or donated value					
1 January 2025	5,159,861	11,759,736	143,135	4,744,465	21,807,197
Additions	130,000	649,801	51,925	600,071	1,431,797
Disposals	-	-	-	(42,646)	(42,646)
At 31 March 2026	5,289,861	12,409,537	195,060	5,301,890	23,196,348
Depreciation					
1 January 2025	-	3,388,230	127,736	2,890,276	6,406,242
Charge for the period	-	298,593	25,042	509,120	832,755
Disposals	-	-	-	(41,781)	(41,781)
At 31 March 2026	-	3,686,823	152,778	3,357,615	7,197,216
Net book value					
At 31 March 2026	5,289,861	8,722,714	42,282	1,944,275	15,999,132
At 31 December 2024	5,159,861	8,371,506	15,399	1,854,189	15,400,955

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Tangible assets – Charity

	Freehold & leasehold land £	Freehold buildings £	Office equipment £	Plant, equipment & external works £	Total £
Cost or donated value					
1 January 2025	5,159,859	11,759,736	140,510	3,724,667	20,784,772
Additions	130,000	649,801	50,229	298,269	1,128,299
Disposals	-	-	-	(17,456)	(17,456)
At 31 March 2026	5,289,859	12,409,537	190,739	4,005,480	21,895,615
Depreciation					
1 January 2025	-	3,388,230	125,110	2,486,854	6,000,194
Charge for the period	-	298,593	24,900	369,089	692,582
Disposals	-	-	-	(17,137)	(17,137)
At 31 March 2026	-	3,686,823	150,010	2,838,806	6,675,639
Net book value					
At 31 March 2026	5,289,859	8,722,714	40,729	1,166,674	15,219,976
At 31 December 2024	5,159,859	8,371,506	15,400	1,237,813	14,784,578

Heritage assets

The Trust defines its Heritage Assets as Nature Reserves these are included within the Fixed Assets amount under Freehold and Leasehold Land.

15 **Investment Properties**

	2025/6 £	2024 £
Fair Value at 1 January 2025	1,490,000	-
Transfer from fixed assets	-	130,279
Net (loss)/gain on valuation	(140,000)	1,359,721
Fair Value at 31 March 2026	1,350,000	1,490,000

The fair values of four investment properties were initially based on valuations by Whirledge and Nott, dated 28/08/2024 and Boydens 03/02/2025, and revalued by Boydens on the 17/03/2026. Rental income from investment properties in the period amounted to £50,250 (2024: £43,410).

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16 **Long Term Investments - Group**

	2025/26 £	2024 £
Quoted investments – market values	8,989,199	10,424,058
Cash held as part of the portfolio	92,852	76,197
	9,082,051	10,500,255

The movement on investments is as follows:

	2025/26 £	2024 £
Market value at 1 January 2025	10,424,058	12,526,024
Additions at cost	2,832,821	12,184,664
Disposals at market value	(4,339,974)	(13,395,663)
Unrealised gains/(losses)	72,294	(890,967)
Market value at 31 March 2026	8,989,199	10,424,058
Historic Cost at 31 March 2026	9,170,520	10,708,324

Investments comprise:

	2025/26 £	2024 £
Fixed interest securities	1,801,359	2,376,876
UK Equities	1,861,533	2,243,501
Overseas Equities	4,637,485	5,013,981
Property Funds	-	-
Other	-	-
Equities	-	-
Fixed Income	-	-
Alternative Investments	688,822	789,700
Properties	-	-
Liquid Assets	-	-
	8,989,199	10,424,058

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16 **Long Term Investments - Charity**

	2025/26 £	2024 £
Quoted investments – market values	5,308,724	6,468,890
Cash held as part of the portfolio	41,268	53,264
Subsidiary share capital	3	2
	5,349,995	6,522,156

The movement on investments is as follows:	2025/26 £	2024 £
Market value at 1 January 2025	6,468,892	8,618,452
Additions at cost	1,649,766	7,744,239
Disposals at market value	(2,809,882)	(9,328,778)
Unrealised (losses)/gains	(49)	(565,021)
Market value at 31 March 2026	5,308,727	6,468,892
Historic Cost at 31 March 2026	5,451,832	6,650,268

Investments comprise	2025/26 £	2024 £
Fixed interest securities	1,348,179	1,842,152
UK Equities	1,217,895	1,505,056
Overseas Equities	2,319,838	2,630,305
Property Funds	-	-
Equities	-	-
Fixed Income	-	-
Alternative Investments	422,815	491,379
Properties	-	-
Liquid Assets	-	-
	-	-
	5,308,727	6,468,892

Essex Wildlife Trust Limited has five subsidiaries, three of which are limited by share capital and two of which are limited by guarantee, which are incorporated in England. The share capital above consists of 2 ordinary shares of £1 each held for Essex Ecology Services Limited and 1 ordinary share of £1 held for Essex BNG and Green Finance Limited. The share capital of Essex Wildlife Sales Limited was initially set up and then donated to the Trust. No account is taken of the value of this gift in the financial statements.

Further details concerning the activities and assets of these companies are given in notes 25 & 26.

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17 **Debtors**

	Group		Charity	
	2025/26	2024	2025/26	2024
	£	£	£	£
Trade debtors	334,831	116,869	272,290	54,699
Amounts due from Group undertakings	-	-	800,544	648,404
Legacies	417,426	1,834,498	417,426	1,834,498
Operating Lease Prepayment	-	-	76,692	-
Prepayments and accrued income	362,612	293,332	311,639	268,672
Other debtors	96,338	449,202	91,689	443,040
	1,211,207	2,693,901	1,970,280	3,249,313

Financial instruments included in the above group debtor balances amount to £919,750 (2024: £2,021,551) and above charity debtor balances amount to £1,721,063 (2024: £2,582,245).

18 **Short Term Investments – Current assets**

	Group		Charity	
	2025/26	2024	2025/26	2024
	£	£	£	£
Short term deposits	92,852	963,702	41,268	940,769

19 **Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year**

	Group		Charity	
	2025/26	2024	2025/26	2024
	£	£	£	£
Trade creditors	544,746	246,469	403,274	184,924
Amounts due to Group undertakings	-	-	323,595	342,508
Taxes and social security costs	259,352	195,719	149,850	110,391
Accruals and deferred income	287,696	222,826	203,155	188,336
	1,091,794	665,014	1,079,874	826,159

Deferred Income Breakdown

Group	At start of the period	Movement	At end of the period
	£	£	£
Deferred Income	102,240	31,127	133,367
	102,240	**31,127**	**133,367**

Charity	At start of the period	Movement	At end of the period
	£	£	£
Deferred Income	100,859	11,016	111,875
	100,859	**11,016**	**111,875**

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20. Creditors Amounts falling due after one year:

	Group		Charity	
	2025/26	**2024**	**2025/26**	**2024**
	£	**£**	**£**	**£**
Within 2 to 5 years	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Over 5 years	62,500	78,125	62,500	78,125
	112,500	**128,125**	**112,500**	128,125

Financial instruments, included in notes 19 and 20 for the above group creditor balances, amount to £832,442 (2024: £469,295) and above charity creditor balances amount to £930,023 (2024: £715,768).

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21 Designated funds – Group and charity

These funds have been set aside for projects that are not fully funded by restricted income. Any unspent funds will be spent over the coming years as the expenditure for which these funds have been set aside is incurred.

2025/26

	Opening Balance at 1 Jan 2025	Incoming funds	Outgoing funds	Transfers	Closing Balance 31 Mar 2026
Designated funds - projects					
Adversity Reserve	250,000	-	-	-	250,000
Interpretation fund	64,606	-	(7,850)	-	56,756
Opportunity Reserve	250,000	-	-	-	250,000
Total Designated Funds	**564,606**	-	(7,850)	**-**	**556,756**

2024

	Opening Balance at 1 Jan 2024	Incoming funds	Outgoing funds	Transfers	Closing Balance 31 Dec 2024
Designated funds - projects					
Adversity Reserve	250,000	-	-	-	250,000
Interpretation fund	64,606	-	-	-	64,606
Opportunity Reserve	250,000	-	-	-	250,000
Total Designated Funds	**564,606**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**564,606**

Adversity Reserve – this fund is set aside by the Trustees to offset expenditure against unforeseen or unbudgeted events.

Interpretation fund - these funds have been allocated by the Trustees to implement the new interpretation strategy which links with the marketing strategy and charitable objectives.

Opportunity Reserve - an allocation of funds readily available to investigate new ventures that might be explored during the year.

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22 Restricted Income funds – Group and charity

2025/26 – Group and Charity

	Opening Balance at 1 Jan 2025	Income	Expenditure	Unrealised Gain/(Losses) on Investments	Transfers	Closing Balance 31 Mar 2026
Fixed Asset Fund	11,462,456	-	(418,865)	-	939,811	11,983,402
In Memory Funds	29,942	13,714	(3,235)	-	-	40,421
Local Group Balances	50,170	24,627	(19,131)	-	-	55,666
Donated Funds for Reserves	522,620	334,313	(217,700)	-	(80,682)	558,551
Project Funds	1,387,029	974,499	(632,373)	-	(765,860)	963,295
Land Purchase Appeals and Donations	144,190	53,079	(9,349)	-	(130,000)	57,920
Restricted Legacy Funds	632,400	100,042	(133,354)	-	(185,131)	413,957
Other Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Charity Restricted Funds	**14,228,807**	**1,500,274**	**(1,434,007)**	**-**	**(221,862)**	**14,073,212**
Chafford Gorges fund	4,041,466	177,868	(215,982)	64,185	-	4,067,537
Thameside Nature Park fund	1,055,768	398,622	(230,098)	-	-	1,224,292
Total Group Restricted Funds	**19,326,041**	**2,076,764**	**(1,880,087)**	**64,185**	**(221,862)**	**19,365,041**

2024 – Group and Charity

	Opening Balance at 1 Jan 2024	Income	Expenditure	Unrealised Gain/(Losses) on Investments	Transfers	Closing Balance 31 Dec 2024
Fixed Asset Fund	11,369,682	-	(316,417)	-	409,191	11,462,456
In Memory Funds	26,372	7,403	(3,833)	-	-	29,942
Local Group Balances	44,827	21,926	(16,583)	-	-	50,170
Donated Funds for Reserves	460,842	206,179	(74,014)	-	(70,387)	522,620
Project Funds	279,496	1,691,657	(433,499)	-	(150,625)	1,387,029
Land Purchase Appeals and Donations	157,052	175,333	(16)	-	(188,179)	144,190
Restricted Legacy Funds	2,771,260	-	(34,873)	-	(2,103,987)	632,400
Other Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Charity Restricted Funds	**15,109,531**	**2,102,498**	**(879,235)**	**-**	**(2,103,987)**	**14,228,807**
Chafford Gorges fund	4,091,441	214,536	(196,098)	(68,413)	-	4,041,466
Thameside Nature Park fund	834,571	370,400	(149,203)	-	-	1,055,768
Total Group Restricted Funds	**20,035,543**	**2,687,434**	**(1,224,536)**	**(68,413)**	**(2,103,987)**	**19,326,041**

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Restricted funds are unspent funds that arise out of the Trust's ongoing activities, the Trust may have funding to carry out a specific project, or a donor has specified some restriction in which the donation may be used. These restricted funds have been classified under several headings to group funds with similar restrictions together.

Fixed Asset Fund – represents the net book value of Restricted Fixed Assets.

In Memory funds – have been donated to the Trust by family and friends In Memory of a named individual.

Local Group Balances – represents the balance of funds raised by local groups that have not been allocated to projects or expenditure on our reserves.

Donated Funds for Reserves – represents the balance of amounts that have been allocated to specific reserves or geographic areas.

Project Funds – represents the balance of amounts that have been granted to the Trust to complete specific short and long term projects.

Land Purchase Appeals and Donations – represents the balance of amounts specifically held, either through appeals or donations for land purchases.

Restricted Legacy Funds – represents the balance of Legacy funds that have been received and have specific conditions for their use.

Other Funds – represents the brought forward balances of smaller funds that have been either spent or allocated into the preceding categories during the year.

Chafford Gorges fund is for managing the reserve at Chafford Gorges, Grays.

Thameside Nature Park fund is for managing the reserve at Mucking, Thurrock.

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23 Endowment funds – Group and charity

These are funds which will have arisen from an appeal, from a specific donation, or from grants. Permanent endowments must be retained with the income used for the purpose for which it was given to the Trust whereas expendable endowments can be utilised once the trustees consider it appropriate.

2025/26

	Opening Balance at 1 Jan 2025	Income	Expenditure	Un/realised Gains/Losses	Transfers	Closing Balance 31 Mar 2026
Holland and Arthur Endowment	528,830	13,504	(7,016)	4,056	-	539,374
Langdon Dowsett Interest	272,595	6,961	-	2,090	-	281,646
Total Endowment Funds	801,425	20,465	(7,016)	**6,146**	-	**821,020**

2024

	Opening Balance at 1 Jan 2024	Income	Expenditure	Unrealised Gains/Losses	Transfers	Closing Balance 31 Dec 2024
Holland and Arthur Endowment	533,559	13,674	(9,557)	(8,846)	-	528,830
Joan Elliott Endowment	2,233,470	-	(27,341)	-	(2,206,129)	-
Langdon Dowsett Interest	277,242	7,030	(7,080)	(4,597)	-	272,595
Total Endowment Funds	**3,044,271**	**20,704**	**(43,978)**	**(13,443)**	**(2,206,129)**	**801,425**

Following an assessment, the Joan Elliot Fund was determined to be unrestricted and subsequently transferred to core funds.

The Holland and Arthur fund is to be used to manage (or purchase or put towards a purchase of) land in the District of Tendring.

The Langdon Dowsett fund is to be used to part fund the running of the Langdon reserve.

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24 Analysis of Funds

24a Analysis of net assets between funds- Group

2025/26	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Totals 2026 £
Intangible fixed assets	-	-	-	-
Tangible fixed assets	3,369,354	12,622,098	7,680	15,999,132
Long-term investments	6,293,913	3,680,472	364,814	10,339,199
Current assets	712,005	3,212,476	448,526	4,373,007
Current liabilities	(941,789)	(150,005)	-	(1,091,794)
Long term liabilities	(112,500)	-	-	(112,500)
Defined benefit pension	(122,510)	-	-	(122,510)
Total net assets	9,198,473	19,365,041	821,020	29,384,534

2024	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Totals 2024 £
Intangible fixed assets	5,700			5,700
Tangible fixed assets	4,965,108	11,923,808	2,039	16,890,955
Long-term investments	6,169,506	3,955,166	299,386	10,424,058
Current assets	764,147	3,607,899	500,000	4,872,046
Current liabilities	(504,182)	(160,832)	-	(665,014)
Long term liabilities	(128,125)	-	-	(128,125)
Defined benefit pension	(255,277)	-	-	(255,277)
Total net assets	11,016,877	19,326,041	801,425	31,144,343

Analysis of net assets between funds- Charity

2025/26	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Totals 2026 £
Intangible fixed assets	-	-	-	-
Tangible fixed assets	3,316,858	11,895,438	7,680	15,219,976
Long-term investments	6,293,913	-	364,814	6,658,727
Current assets	1,420,034	2,177,774	448,526	4,046,334
Current liabilities	(1,079,874)	-	-	(1,079,874)
Long term liabilities	(112,500)	-	-	(112,500)
Defined benefit pension	(122,510)	-	-	(122,510)
Total net assets	9,715,921	14,073,212	821,020	24,610,153

2024	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Totals 2024 £
Intangible fixed assets	5,700	-	-	5,700
Tangible fixed assets	4,898,039	11,374,500	2,039	16,274,578
Long-term investments	6,169,506	-	299,386	6,468,892
Current assets	1,532,095	2,854,307	500,000	4,886,402
Current liabilities	(826,159)	-	-	(826,159)
Long term liabilities	(128,125)	-	-	(128,125)
Defined benefit pension	(255,277)	-	-	(255,277)
Total net assets	11,395,779	14,228,807	801,425	26,426,011

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24b Movement in Funds

2025/26 - Group	Note	Opening Balance at 1 Jan 2025 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Un/realised Gain/(Losses) on investments	Transfers £	Closing Balance 31 Mar 2026 £
Unrestricted Funds							
Free Reserves		5,481,463	9,564,790	(11,353,715)	206,632	23,193	3,922,363
Fixed Asset Fund		4,970,808	-	(310,123)	(140,000)	198,669	4,719,354
Designated Funds		564,606	-	(7,850)		-	556,756
Total Unrestricted Funds		**11,016,877**	**9,564,790**	**(11,671,688)**	**66,632**	**221,862**	**9,198,473**
Restricted Funds							
Fixed Asset Fund		11,923,808	-	(526,694)	-	1,224,984	12,622,098
Other Restricted Funds		2,304,999	1,508,978	(980,662)	-	(1,161,664)	1,671,651
Subsidiary Charity - Thameside Nature Park		1,055,768	398,076	(159,981)	-	(236,249)	1,057,614
Subsidiary Charity - Chafford Gorges		4,041,466	169,710	(212,750)	64,185	(48,933)	4,013,678
Total Restricted Funds		**19,326,041**	**2,076,764**	**(1,880,087)**	**64,185**	**(221,862)**	**19,365,041**
Endowment Funds							
Fixed Asset Fund		2,039	-	(1,949)		7,590	7,680
Endowment Funds		799,386	26,611	(5,067)		(7,590)	813,340
Total Endowment Funds	23	**801,425**	**26,611**	**(7,016)**	**-**	**-**	**821,020**
Total Funds		**31,144,343**	**11,668,165**	**(13,558,791)**	**130,817**	**-**	**29,384,534**

2025/26 - Charity	Note	Opening Balance at 1 Jan 2025 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Un/realised Gain/(Losses) on investments	Transfers £	Closing Balance 31 Mar 2026 £
Unrestricted Funds							
Free Reserves		5,927,434	6,060,344	(7,743,066)	206,632	40,964	4,492,308
Fixed Asset Fund		4,903,739	-	(277,779)	(140,000)	180,898	4,666,858
Designated Funds		564,606	-	(7,850)			556,756
Total Unrestricted Funds		**11,395,779**	**6,060,344**	**(8,028,695)**	**66,632**	**221,862**	**9,715,922**
Restricted Funds							
Fixed Asset Fund		11,374,500	-	(418,865)	-	939,803	11,895,438
Other Restricted Funds		2,854,307	1,500,275	(1,015,144)	-	(1,161,665)	2,177,773
Total Restricted Funds		**14,228,807**	**1,500,275**	**(1,434,009)**	**-**	**(221,862)**	**14,073,211**
Endowment Funds							
Fixed Asset Fund	**23**	2,039	-	(1,949)	-	7,590	7,680
Endowment Funds		799,386	26,611	(5,067)	-	(7,590)	813,340
Total Endowment Funds		**801,425**	**26,611**	**(7,016)**	**-**	**-**	**821,020**
Total Funds		**26,426,011**	**7,587,230**	**(9,469,720)**	**66,632**	**-**	**24,610,153**

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2024 - Group	Note	Opening Balance at 1 Jan 2024 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Unrealised Gains/(Losses) on investments	Transfers £	Closing Balance 31 Dec 2024 £
Unrestricted Funds							
Free Reserves		3,147,884	7,244,898	(8,215,402)	(112,641)	3,416,724	5,481,463
Fixed Asset Fund		2,958,790	-	(241,096)	1,359,722	893,392	4,970,808
Designated Funds		564,606	-	-		-	564,606
Total Unrestricted Funds		**6,671,280**	**7,244,898**	**(8,456,498)**	**1,247,081**	**4,310,116**	**11,016,877**
Restricted Funds							
Fixed Asset Fund		11,369,682	-	(316,417)		870,543	11,923,808
Other Restricted Funds		3,739,849	2,102,498	(562,818)		(2,974,530)	2,304,999
Subsidiary Charity - Thameside Nature Park		834,571	370,400	(149,203)			1,055,768
Subsidiary Charity – Chafford Gorges		4,091,441	214,536	(196,098)	(68,413)	-	4,041,466
Total Restricted Funds		**20,035,543**	**2,687,434**	**(1,224,536)**	**(68,413)**	**(2,103,987)**	**19,326,041**
Endowment Funds	23						
Fixed Asset Fund		502,829	-	(790)		(500,000)	2,039
Endowment Funds		2,541,442	20,704	(43,188)	(13,443)	(1,706,129)	799,386
Total Endowment Funds		**3,044,271**	**20,704**	**(43,978)**	**(13,443)**	**(2,206,129)**	**801,425**
Total Funds		**29,751,094**	**9,953,036**	**(9,725,012)**	**1,165,225**	**-**	**31,144,343**

2024 - Charity	Opening Balance at 1 Jan 2024 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Unrealised Gains/(Losses) on investments	Transfers £	Closing Balance 31 Dec 2024 £
Unrestricted Funds						
Free Reserves	3,593,578	4,527,322	(5,564,618)	(112,641)	3,483,793	5,927,434
Fixed Asset Fund	2,958,790	-	(241,096)	1,359,722	826,323	4,903,739
Designated Funds	564,606	-				564,606
Total Unrestricted Funds	**7,116,974**	**4,527,322**	**(5,805,714)**	**1,247,081**	**4,310,116**	**11,395,779**
Restricted Funds						
Fixed Asset Fund	11,369,682	-	(316,417)	-	321,235	11,374,500
Other Restricted Funds	3,739,849	2,102,498	(562,818)	-	(2,425,222)	2,854,307
Total Restricted Funds	**15,109,531**	**2,102,498**	**(879,235)**	**-**	**(2,103,987)**	**14,228,807**
Endowment Funds	**23**					
Fixed Asset Fund	502,829	-	(790)	-	(500,000)	2,039
Endowment Funds	2,541,442	20,704	(43,188)	**(13,443)**	(1,706,129)	799,386
Total Endowment Funds	**3,044,271**	**20,704**	**(43,978)**	**(13,443)**	**(2,206,129)**	**801,425**
Total Funds	**25,270,776**	**6,650,524**	**(6,728,927)**	**1,233,638**	**-**	**26,426,011**

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25 Trading companies

The trading activities of the Trust are carried out through wholly owned subsidiary companies, Essex Wildlife Sales Limited (EWS) company number 02548617, Essex Ecology Services Limited (EES) company number 02853947 and Essex BNG and Green Finance Limited (BNG) company number (16316568). All companies gift aid their taxable profits across to the Trust.

EWS operates shops and catering in all our Nature Discovery Centres.

EES offers environmental project consultancy services.

BNG offers generation and sale of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) units to developers.

Profit and Loss Accounts

	EWS		EES		BNG	
	2025/26	2024	2025/26	2024	2025/26	2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Turnover	4,178,974	2,935,834	60,557	89,095	1,666	-
Cost of sales	(1,608,460)	(1,158,996)	(80,343)	(156,790)	(152,728)	-
Gross profit	2,570,514	1,776,838	(19,786)	(67,695)	(151,062)	-
Administrative exp	(2,154,337)	(1,577,144)	(11,887)	(41,386)	(36,904)	-
	416,177	199,694	(31,673)	(109,081)	(187,966)	-
Gift aided profits to EWT	300,057	-	-	-	-	-
Reserves brought fwd	(116,120)	(315,814)	(242,077)	(132,996)	-	-
Reserves carried fwd	-	(116,120)	(273,750)	(242,077)	(187,966)	-

Balance Sheets

	EWS		EES		BNG	
	2025/26	2024	2025/26	2024	2025/26	2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	49,809	65,389	2,688	1,680	-	-
Current Assets	715,727	470,750	76,172	28,923	12,637	-
Current Liabilities	(765,534)	(652,257)	(352,608)	(272,678)	(192,034)	-
Long term Liabilities	-	-	-	-	(8,568)	
Total net assets	2	(116,118)	(273,748)	(242,075)	(187,965)	-
Rep by profit and loss reserves	-	(116,120)	(273,750)	(242,077)	(187,966)	-
Rep by share cap	2	2	2	2	1	-

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26 Subsidiary charities

Chafford Gorges Limited (company number 05189256, charity number 1113511), a company limited by guarantee, is also a registered charity over which the Essex Wildlife Trust has full control. The charity manages and operates the area of land known as Chafford Gorges Nature Park in Grays Thurrock, excluding the Nature Discovery Centre on the site, which is operated by the Trust.

Thameside Nature Park Limited (company number 07151955, charity number 1137142), which is also a company limited by guarantee, is also a registered charity over which the Essex Wildlife Trust has full control. The charity manages and operates the area of land known as Thameside Nature Park at Mucking, excluding the Nature Discovery Centre on the site, which is operated by the Trust.

Summaries taken from the accounts for the two charities for the period ended 31 March 2026 appear below.

Statement of Financial Activities

	Chafford Gorges		Thameside Nature Park	
	2025/26	2024	2025/26	2024
	£	£	£	£
Incoming resources	177,868	214,536	398,622	370,400
Resources expended	(232,588)	(209,207)	(248,520)	(159,915)
Net (outgoing)/incoming resources	(54,720)	5,329	150,102	210,485
Gains/(losses) on investments	64,185	(68,413)	-	-
Net movement in funds for the year	9,465	(63,084)	150,102	210,485
Reserves brought forward	3,945,597	4,008,681	875,370	664,885
Reserves carried forward	3,955,062	3,945,597	1,025,472	875,370

Balance Sheets

	Chafford Gorges		Thameside Nature Park	
	2025/26	2024	2025/26	2024
	£	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	105,733	76,638	620,925	472,670
Investments at market value	3,680,472	3,955,166	-	-
	3,786,205	4,031,804	620,925	472,670
Current assets	312,477	69,935	410,932	407,390
Current liabilities	(143,620)	(156,142)	(6,385)	(4,690)
Total net assets	3,955,062	3,945,597	1,025,472	875,370
Represented by unrestricted funds	3,942,835	3,944,776	263,146	274,616
Represented by restricted funds	12,227	821	762,326	600,754

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27 Members' guarantee

The Charity is a Company Limited by Guarantee and incorporated in England and Wales. In the event of its winding up or dissolution, if there remains, after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, any property whatsoever, it shall not be paid to or distributed among the Members of the Trust but shall be given or transferred to some other institution or institutions having objects similar to the Trust or to some other charitable object.

The aforementioned are subject to further clauses as stated within the Company's Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Every member of the Trust undertakes to contribute to the assets of the Trust in the event of it being wound up, while he/she is a member, or within one year after he/she ceases to be a member, such amounts not exceeding one pound sterling.

28 Contingent liabilities

A legal charge created on 23 March 1987 amounting to £38,000 exists over a parcel of land included within the group's fixed assets.

The company is part of a group VAT registration and is therefore potentially liable for VAT liabilities of the other members of the VAT group, which consist of the parent company and its subsidiaries. As at 31 March 2026, the VAT liability of the group was £68,043 (2024: £12,977), Essex Wildlife Trust Ltd had a period end debtor balance of £36,986 (2024: £67,068).

29 Commitments under operating leases - Group

At 31 March 2026, the group had non-cancellable commitments under operating leases expiring as follows:

	2025/26		2024 (restated)	
	£	**£**	**£**	£
	Land/Building	Equipment	Land/Building	Equipment
Expiring within 1 year	22,155	78,007	10,119	116,391
2-5 years	-	17,452	-	64,137
	22,155	95,459	10,119	180,528

Commitments under operating leases – Charity

At 31 March 2026 the charity had non-cancellable commitments under operating leases expiring as follows:

	2025/26		2024 (restated)	
	£	**£**	**£**	£
	Land/Buildings	Equipment	Land/Buildings	Equipment
Expiring within 1 year	22,155	66,519	10,119	111,653
2-5 years	-	8,332	-	64,137
	22,155	74,851	10,119	175,790

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Operating lease arrangements where the charity is the lessor

The charity has entered into an operating lease arrangement with Essex BNG and Green Finance Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary undertaking, in respect of land used for Biodiversity Net Gain activities.
The lease commenced on 18 July 2025 and has a term of 60 years.

At 31 March 2026, the aggregate future minimum lease payments receivable under non-cancellable operating leases were as follows:

	2025/26 £	2024 £
- within one year	**29,835**	**-**
- between two and five years	**630,797**	**-**
More than five years	**8,260,033**	**-**
	8,920,665	**-**

The lease is an intra-group arrangement and is eliminated on consolidation.

30 Capital Commitments – Group

Capital commitments represent future contractual commitments entered into by the Trust in respect of capital projects that are underway but not yet complete at the balance sheet date.

At 31 March 2026, the Trust had capital commitments of £313,626 (2024: £nil) relating to the Abbotts Hall Farm project, Restoring Natural Processes at Abbotts Hall, which is being funded through the Biffa Award Partnership Grants Scheme. The project includes fencing, water infrastructure, habitat creation and associated site improvement works.

31 **(Deficit)/surplus for the financial year**

As permitted by Section 408 of the Companies Act 2006, the parent charitable company's Statement of Financial Activities has not been included in these financial statements. The surplus/(deficit) for the financial year is made up as follows: -

	2025/26 £	2024 £
Parent charitable company's (deficit)/surplus for the financial year	(1,815,858)	1,155,235

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32 **Comparative information**

	Notes	Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowment fund	Total 2024
		£	£	£	£
Incoming and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	**3**	2,750,830	1,841,078	-	4,591,908
Charitable activities	**4**	1,159,243	714,544	-	1,873,787
Other trading activities	**5**	3,034,976	14,391	-	3,049,367
Investments	**6**	299,849	117,421	20,704	437,974
Total		7,244,898	2,687,434	20,704	9,953,036
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	**7**	4,732,174	1,166,689	40,557	5,939,420
Raising Funds	**8**	3,724,324	57,847	3,421	3,785,592
Total	**9**	8,456,498	1,224,536	43,978	9,725,012
Transfer between funds		4,310,116	(2,103,987)	(2,206,129)	-
Net losses on defined benefit pension scheme	**11**	18,375	-	-	18,375
Net (losses)/gains on investments	**16**	(131,015)	(68,413)	(13,443)	(212,871)
Unrealised Gain on invt properties		1,359,721	-	-	1,359,721
Net income and net movement in funds		4,345,597	(709,502)	(2,242,846)	1,393,249
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		6,671,280	20,035,543	3,044,271	29,751,094
Total funds carried forward	**24**	11,016,877	19,326,041	801,425	31,144,343

The statement of financial activities contains all gains and losses for the year and all activities relate to continuing operations. The profit for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006 is the net incoming resources before unrealised losses/gains.

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33 Related party transactions

The charity has taken advantage of the exemptions confirmed by FRS102 not to disclose transactions with its wholly owned subsidiaries**.**

A member of EWT staff has a related party who is a partner of Tolleshunt Turf Farms. The transactions between Tolleshunt Turf Farms relate to the purchase of Play Bark. The items invoices totalled £155 in 2025/26 (2024: £nil).

Trustees are covered by the Trustee and Senior Management indemnity policy whilst discharging their duties for charity and group activities. The indemnity policy amounted to a cost of £2,813 (2024: £2,731).

Some of the Charity Trustees and Senior Managers are members of EWT, these members pay the same membership rate and receive the same benefits as membership available to the public. Additionally, the Charity has corporate members that are related to organisations with which Trustees have external relationships with. These memberships are at the same membership rate and receive the same benefits as memberships available to the public.

None of the trustees have been paid any remuneration or received any other benefits from Essex Wildlife Trust or it's subsidiaries. Donations and membership income received by the charity from Trustees and Directors of its group during 2025/26 are £1,088 (2024 : £801).

The charity has entered into a lease arrangement with its subsidiary, Essex BNG and Green Finance Limited, in respect of land at Abbotts Hall Farm.