

Wildlife and
Countryside



Wildlife and Countryside Link

(A company limited by guarantee)

Company number: 03889519

Annual Report 2017

The Trustees submit their report together with the financial statements of Wildlife and Countryside Link for the year ended 31 December 2017.

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A Message from Link's Chair

It gives me great pleasure to introduce Wildlife and Countryside Link's Annual Report for 2017 and to reflect on some of our many achievements.

We reached the mid-point of our 2015-19 strategic plan this year, providing a useful and timely opportunity to reflect on our many successes, along with exploring how we deal most effectively with the fast paced and ever-changing external environment in which we work. Brexit presents both a threat and a huge opportunity for our sector and the scale of the task is so great that working collaboratively is the only way to deliver positive outcomes for the environment and for animal welfare. Fortunately, collaboration is at the very core of Link's work.

Key to our effectiveness is to support and enhance our members' work. The Link staff team and our expert working groups continue to develop strong partnerships with other coalitions and organisations to maximise our impact for the environment and animal welfare post-Brexit. For example, we have carried out joint advocacy work with our sister Link organisations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on Access to Justice. With Greener UK, we developed important amendments for the (EU) Withdrawal Bill, and we joined up with Sustain and its members to develop proposals for a sustainable farming and land management policy. Collaboration with the UK Centre for Animal Law and over 40 animal protection organisations also led to the development of a Brexit animal welfare manifesto.

Although Brexit can feel all consuming, Link also continues to deliver on a wide range of issues largely unaffected by the UK's withdrawal from the EU. In 2017 Link worked with members to produce over 30 publications, including 20 responses and submissions to parliamentary inquiries, 10 briefings, and three major reports, along with many unpublished briefings and responses for Defra officials and other key decision-makers. Our publications influence thinking and policy development at the highest level, delivering benefits for the environment and animal welfare.

In 2017 we pressed ahead with campaigns on a wide range of high profile issues including disposable packaging, cetacean bycatch, sustainable farming and embedding nature in water company business plans. Our media presence has gone from strength to strength, with widespread coverage for a number of campaigns, including our news story on plastic waste at Christmas. We also continue to provide a platform for member's views through our popular blog posts and have successfully built up our presence on social media. These examples represent just a few of the many activities the Link team has supported during a very busy year.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you. The tireless commitment and huge expertise of our members makes the work of Link possible. Our staff bring all the threads together to deliver amazing results. My fellow trustees steer the organisation with integrity and pragmatism. Finally, we are grateful to the charitable trusts that support Link's work - the Esme Fairbairn Foundation, the John Ellerman Foundation, the Calouste-Gulbenkian Foundation and the Kestrelman Trust.

I have no doubt that 2018 will be another challenging year, but one full of opportunities. We will continue to be flexible and responsive to members' needs and the ever-changing external environment. We will make the most of opportunities presented by Brexit, delivering a wide range of member-led initiatives and campaigns, supported by inside track advocacy, in order to inform and influence decisions. As ever, we will be a critical friend to Government.

I believe that the strong relationships we have developed with other coalitions, the amazing commitment of our members, and the skillful professionalism of the Link staff team, will mean that Link achieves all of our shared ambitions, and more besides.

Dr Hazel Norman
Chair

Reference and Administrative Details

Link Trustees

Hazel Norman, Chair
Paul Miner, Deputy Chair
David Lind, Treasurer
Chris Butler-Stroud, Trustee
Marcus Gilleard, Trustee
Nicola Hutchinson, Trustee
Stephen Trotter, Trustee
Nikki Williams, Trustee (Re-appointed 4 December 2017)

Company Registered Number

03889519

Charity Registered Number

1107460

Principal Office Address

89 Albert Embankment
Vauxhall
London
SE1 7TP

Company Secretary and Director

Dr Elaine King

Independent Examiner

John Speed
JS2 Limited
One Crown Square
Woking
Surrey
GU21 6HR

Bankers

The Co-operative Bank
PO Box 101
1 Balloon Street
Manchester
M60 4EP

Nationwide
5-11 St George's Street
Douglas
Isle of Man
IM99 1RN

Solicitors

Russell-Cooke Solicitors
2 Putney Hill
London
SW15 6AB

Trustee Report

Objectives and Activities

Our objectives and strategy

Wildlife and Countryside Link (Link) is a unique coalition of environment and animal welfare organisations. Our 47 members practise and advocate environmentally sensitive land management, promote high animal welfare standards and encourage respect for and enjoyment of natural landscapes and features, the historic and marine environment and biodiversity. Our vision is 'to secure and shape a healthy, enhanced and accessible natural world'. Link wants England's wildlife sites to comprise a coherent and resilient ecological network, on land and at sea.

Our charitable objective is to promote the conservation and protection of wildlife and the countryside for the benefit of the public. Since 1980, we have been doing this by facilitating collaboration between voluntary organisations in the UK. We work with our members, and others, to embrace a new, restorative approach, which rebuilds and protects nature and creates a more resilient natural environment for the benefit of wildlife and people.

How do we achieve our charitable objectives?

- Addressing a range of policy issues through managing and supporting specialist working groups
- Convening meetings with statutory conservation agencies, Ministers, Government officials and other stakeholders
- Developing and advocating key policy messages to decision-makers
- Organising events such as seminars and conferences on specific policy areas
- Facilitating exchange of information and ideas between members and others
- Representing Link and its members to external bodies including Government and other stakeholders

We began to implement our ambitious five-year strategy in 2015, which recognises that we need to adapt and evolve in response to an ever-changing political and financial environment. This renewed ambition and enhanced approach prepared us well for the outcome of the EU Referendum in 2016, and has shaped our work with members to secure positive outcomes for the environment and for animal welfare as the UK prepares to leave the EU. Our ambition for Link is clear - to be a powerful, credible and effective voice for the natural environment and for our member organisations, delivering influence and impact, while enhancing our delivery of clear benefit to our members' work.

In order to realise our ambition for Link towards 2019, we are working to four strategic objectives. These strategic objectives form the framework for Link's enhanced approach:

- 1: Increase and focus Link's influence and impact
- 2: Strengthen our network of relationships and communications
- 3: Increase members' capacity and consolidate our membership
- 4: Grow our capability and establish our financial resilience

2017 represented the mid-point of implementing our strategy and this report makes clear how far we come since first embarking on delivery of the new strategy in early 2015. In 2017, we continued to build on and strengthen what is already good at Link. We increased our capacity and competence, in turn enabling us to deliver increasing value to our members. We continued to develop key relationships to enhance our engagement, influence and impact with our stakeholders, including the Government, its agencies, and other decision-makers and opinion formers. In addition, we worked even more closely with our sister Link organisations in the devolved countries to ensure positive outcomes - especially with regards to Brexit - on a UK scale, while also recognising important cultural and political differences between our four countries.

By reaching out to other organisations and coalitions, Link expanded and strengthened its network of relationships. Link also used communications to great effect to amplify its members' messages and provide a strong, unified voice for the sector.

Trustees' Report (continued)

We continue to make progress in diversifying our sources of income. By securing charitable grants we aim to make our members' subscriptions and donations go further and to minimise the costs of our operations to members, making Link financially sustainable in the long term, while keeping our members at the heart of what we do and how we do it.

In delivering Link's four strategic objectives, the organisation's value to members is two-fold: delivering the leadership to support our members to have impact and influence at the highest level, while simultaneously providing a professional, highly skilled collaborative service to guide and support policy at the highest level.

How do we deliver these objectives?

- **Through leadership:**
 - Gathering intelligence, horizon scanning and advising and supporting members
 - Developing networks of relationships which help us deliver impact for members
 - Delivering focused advocacy messages and campaigns that, when working together with members, will have the most impact and influence

- **Through support:**
 - Advising and supporting working groups which address a range of policy issues
 - Collaborating with members to develop strong and influential joint policies
 - Facilitating the sharing of information and intelligence
 - Providing an accessible and safe place for identifying and ironing-out tensions
 - Developing joint policies, advocacy plans and campaigns

Public Benefit requirement

The Trustees of Wildlife and Countryside Link confirm that the organisation has Charitable Purposes pursuant to the Charities Act 2011. The Trustees believe that there are clear and identifiable public benefits arising from the pursuit of Wildlife and Countryside Link's aims and objectives, and that these benefits are freely available to the public without restriction.

AGM and Annual Debate

Link's Annual General Meeting took place on 4 December at WWF-UK's Living Planet Centre. The AGM provided a timely opportunity to celebrate Link's achievements in 2017 and to look ahead at Link's plans for 2018. The AGM saw the re-appointment of Nikki Williams (Head of Campaigns, Woodland Trust) as an Ordinary Trustee, and the appointment of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Link's 11 expert policy groups.

Following the AGM, Link hosted its annual debate. Chaired by Karen Ellis, Chief Advisor on Economics and Development at WWF-UK, an expert panel debated the question:

'Global leadership starts at home: how can the UK Government take action on the environment and animal welfare in a post Brexit era?'

The panel, comprising author and environmental campaigner, George Monbiot, Good Energy's Juliet Davenport, MEP Catherine Boarder and Client Earth's Karla Hill, covered topics as diverse as the sustainability of global food production, government versus grassroots action, and the fitness of our current economic model.

Trustees' Report (continued)

Achievements and Performance

Our Impact

2017 was an extremely productive and exciting year for Link and its members. Inevitably, responding to Brexit formed the basis of much of our collaborative work, while we also delivered a great deal in areas largely unaffected by the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

As ever, a significant element of Link's time and resources focused on developing and delivering policy, advocacy and campaigns through our specialist working groups. The strength of these groups lies in the partnerships between the Link staff team and the members of the groups, especially with the Chairs and Vice Chairs. Vital too is the huge expertise within our member organisations, and the willingness of so many people who give time and resources to support our collective work.

In 2017 Link managed and provided support for 11 groups on the following policy areas:

- 25 Year Plan for Nature: Co-chair, Richard Benwell (WWT); Co-chair, Karen Ellis (WWF-UK)
- Agriculture: Chair, Helen Chesshire (The Woodland Trust); Vice Chair, Tom Lancaster (RSPB)
- Animal Welfare: Chair, Claire Bass (Humane Society International-UK); Vice Chair, Mark Jones (Born Free Foundation)
- Blueprint for Water: Chair, Hannah Freeman (Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust); Vice Chair, Nathan Richardson (RSPB)
- Environment Links UK Brexit Nature Coalition: Chair, Kate Jennings (RSPB)
- Invasive Non-Native Species: Chair, Camilla Morrison-Bell (British Ecological Society); Vice Chair, Margaret Palmer (Buglife)
- Land Use Planning: Chair, Victoria Bankes Price (Woodland Trust)
- Legal Strategy: Chair, Matt Shardlow (Buglife); Vice Chair, Carol Day (RSPB)
- Marine: Chair, Chris Tuckett (Marine Conservation Society); Vice Chair, Alec Taylor (WWF-UK)
- Whales: Chair, Jenny Lonsdale (Environment Investigation Agency); Vice Chair, Mark Simmonds (Humane Society International-UK)
- Wildlife Crime and Trade: Chair, Mark Jones (Born Free Foundation); Vice Chair, Pete Charleston (Bat Conservation Trust)

Our collective achievements have been numerous this year, and some are set out below. Many successes flow directly from a working group, while a significant number have also drawn on the knowledge and expertise of a wider range of colleagues in our member organisations - such as parliamentary, communications and legal professionals - in addition to experts in other organisations and coalitions. In every area of our work, Link has also continued to develop and nurture valuable relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, decision-makers and opinion-formers, using opportunities for influencing to the benefit of members and the issues we address.

Delivering a #GreenBrexit

In his first speech as Defra Secretary of State, in July 2017, Michael Gove spoke of his ambition to deliver a 'Green Brexit'. With our members, and particularly through our working groups, Link dedicated much of 2017 to ensuring the Secretary of State's ambition becomes reality. Below we set out some of the key impacts Link achieved in 2017 through its Brexit-focussed work.

Sustainable farming and land management

In September 2017, Link's Agriculture Working Group published its proposals for A Future Sustainable Farming and Land Management Policy for England. The Group recommended that the Government moves away from the EU's ineffective and inequitable Common Agricultural Policy and, instead, designs a domestic policy that rewards farmers for delivering public benefits, such as thriving wildlife, clean air and water, healthy soils, high standards of animal welfare and access to the countryside.

Trustees' Report (continued)

Subsequent advocacy efforts ensured that these ideas contributed significantly to the Government's thinking. For example, in November 2017, Michael Gove, Secretary of State at Defra, told a Commons Environmental Audit Committee inquiry: "Some of the most interesting ideas [on agriculture] have come from organisations like Wildlife and Countryside Link." The Secretary of State also quoted directly from the Group's discussion paper in a speech he delivered to a Country Land and Business Association meeting in December 2017. The Secretary of State's words at the Oxford Farming Conference in early 2018 further demonstrated clear alignment of the Government's ambitions with those of Link.

In 2018 the Group will continue to ensure that the Government realises these ambitions and uses its forthcoming Agriculture Bill to secure a bright future for both farming and the environment.

Getting the best deal for animals post-Brexit

Link's Welfare Group continued its very successful collaboration with the UK Centre for Animal Law (A-Law). In October 2017, our two organisations published a summary report outlining recommendations for animal welfare post Brexit. Launched at the Conservative Party Conference, and supported by more than 40 animal protection charities, the report was well received by parliamentarians. Our report was also quoted in a critical debate on the EU Withdrawal Bill - raising the profile of Link and its members. For example, Labour MP Anneliese Dodds, said: "I do not understand why expert groups such as the Association of Lawyers for Animal Welfare or Wildlife and Countryside Link would be suggesting that we need a separate provision if it already existed in existing animal welfare legislation. They are the experts on this, and I am listening to them."

Link, with A-Law, subsequently published a detailed report on animal welfare post-Brexit. Launched in parliament in January 2018, the report uniquely sets out further detail and analysis on the challenges and opportunities for animal welfare after the UK leaves the EU. The recommendations have generated significant positive interest from MPs and Peers, and we will continue to work with the Government and others on this issue in 2018.

The Group were in regular communication with Defra officials on a number of animal welfare issues in 2017, including the public and media reaction to animal sentience.

Protecting environmental laws and principles

To coincide with a number of debates on the EU Withdrawal Bill in November 2017, Link members united to call for crucial environmental principles to be enshrined in legislation. Working with partner organisations, such as Greener UK, Link members analysed the importance of these principles - including the polluter pays principle and the precautionary principle - and engaged with parliamentarians to secure these important principles in the Withdrawal Bill. Link will continue this work in 2018, particularly in contributing to the Government's consultation on a new Environment Act, announced following the significant campaigning of Link organisations.

25 Year Environment Plan

Link's 25 Year Environment Plan Group led the sector's work on an environment plan throughout 2017. Key recommendations and advocacy messages developed by the Group were adopted across the sector and by other key opinion-formers and experts. For example, our recommendations were reflected in the Natural Capital Committee's advice to Government in September 2017. Regular communication with advisors to the Secretary of State provided another effective means of influence.

In January 2018, the Prime Minister launched the Government's long-awaited 25 Year Environment Plan and, although a number of areas will require further strengthening and clear commitment from Government, much of the plan is consistent with Link's recommended approach. Link's response was reported in the media and future work will include maintaining pressure on the Government to ensure that the plan delivers effectively on our shared ambitions.

Safeguarding the UK from invasive species

In 2017, Link's Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) Working Group joined forces with our sister Links in the devolved countries to set out why and how the EU Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Regulation should be fully converted into domestic law after Brexit. The Group held discussions with Defra Minister, Lord Gardiner, and is

Trustees' Report (continued)

a trusted consultee of officials in Defra's INNS department. Through regular meetings, which will continue in 2018, our experts guide and influence the Department's thinking as it drafts the Statutory Instrument that will convert the IAS Regulation into UK law.

Ensuring clean, healthy and thriving seas

Legal analysis by the RSPB and WWF-UK has demonstrated clearly that the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) is the most effective legislation for marine protection in the UK. If the MSFD is not enshrined in UK law, Brexit threatens to weaken the vital protections afforded to our marine environment and its wildlife. The Marine Working Group therefore regularly met with, and provided detailed briefings to, Defra officials throughout 2017. This helped secure the welcome commitment - in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan - that it will maintain the UK Marine Strategy, which contains the protections set out in the MSFD. The Group will continue to engage with the Government and support Link's 25 Year Environment Plan Group in advising on how the Marine Strategy can be best used to achieve success for the 25 Year Plan both domestically, and on an international scale through delivering the Sustainable Development Goals.

Beyond the Brexit bubble

In addition to Brexit-related work, Link continued to achieve significant influence and impact in 2017 on issues not directly linked to the UK withdrawing from the EU. Thanks to the diversity and depth of expertise within the Link team, the Link membership and our many partner organisations, Link was able to deliver tangible results in a number of key areas.

Blueprint for PR19

An important element of the Blueprint for Water's work in 2017 was to encourage water companies in England and Wales to put the environment at the heart of their business plans for 2020 to 2025. Water companies are major private investors in water and environmental management in the UK, so their impact on nature conservation and enhancement is significant. Water company business plans - being developed as part of the 'Price Review 2019' (PR19) - will therefore play a pivotal role in the stewardship of the environment.

Following discussions with water companies and Government agencies, the Blueprint group launched its 'Blueprint for PR19' report in mid-2017, setting out the key priorities that should be reflected in water company business plans to benefit both customers and the natural environment. The proposals were reported in a number of media outlets at the time and the Group continues to work with Defra and others to promote the importance of a resilient environment and water sector. This engagement has resulted in Blueprint's recommended metric being included in Defra's Strategic Policy Statement to Ofwat (the industry regulator), which specifically asks water companies to explore long-term resilience. The Blueprint's metrics were also referenced by Ofwat in its Methodology for PR19 document.

Planning for People and Wildlife

Following the introduction of a statutory brownfield land register in July 2017, Link's Land Use Planning Group published guidance to assist local authorities in identifying suitable brownfield land for development while safeguarding wildlife havens. Informal feedback from a number of local authorities indicates that the guidance has been useful as a reference when considering sites that may otherwise be overlooked in terms of their benefits to nature.

Getting #DrasticOnPlastic

Campaigning by many Link members and Parliamentarians, in addition to the impact of the BBC's award winning Blue Planet II series, resulted in a groundswell of practical action and political pressure to reduce plastic waste. The Marine Working Group, along with marine colleagues in our sister Links in the devolved countries, contributed its expert views and made recommendations to a number of consultations throughout the year. This included responding to Government consultations on microbeads and subsequent legislation to ban these products. We also responded to the Environmental Audit Committee inquiries on coffee cups and plastic bottles, disposable packaging and microbeads and, as a result of such a united and powerful joint sector voice on the issue, the Government announced a ban on microbeads in cosmetics and personal care products.

Trustees' Report (continued)

Ensuring access to justice

2017 saw a huge victory for the environment sector in England and Wales, with a High Court ruling in September finding in favour of three members of Link's Legal Strategy Group (RSPB, Friends of the Earth and Client Earth). Mr Justice Dove told the UK Government that its rules for environmental cases must be changed to protect those taking legal action. He stated that costs should remain capped at the beginning of a case, giving more certainty to individuals or charities bringing a case to court.

Success in the courts followed a huge amount of work carried out by Link's Legal Group, in collaboration with our sister Links in the devolved countries and other legal professionals. For example, earlier in the year, 26 Link members and a number of Heads of Chambers wrote to the incoming Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, David Lidington MP, expressing concern about the new Costs Rules. The Group also maintained pressure on the Government at the Sixth meeting of the Aarhus Convention, held in Budva, Montenegro, in September, when Carol Day, Vice-Chair of Link's Legal Group, presented our statement on access to justice to the Meeting of the Parties. As a result, Decision VI/8K, concerning the UK and costs, was formally adopted. Significantly, the Decision requires the Governments of the UK to take urgent action to bring the UK back into compliance with Article 9(4) of the Aarhus Convention.

Successes for cetaceans

The Whales Working Group liaised closely with Defra on a number of key issues in 2017. For example, after expressing our concern to the Minister, George Eustice, the Whales Working Group was instrumental in securing a further three years' funding from Defra for the Cetacean Stranding Investigation Programme (CSIP), which conducts vital research on the health and welfare of cetaceans.

Link has also influenced Government thinking on pollutants in the marine environment. In advance of the Biennial meeting of the Stockholm Convention in Geneva - a treaty which aims to eliminate or restrict the production and use of persistent organic pollutants - the Whales Working Group and Link's Blueprint for Water group joined forces to develop a briefing for Defra to use at the meeting. This was complemented by a response to a Government consultation on its implementation plan for the Convention. Link's response was one of only six contributions to the Government consultation and Link's influence on the Government's thinking is clear. In its subsequent response, the Government committed to a number of initiatives recommended solely by Link. This is a welcome development but concern remains that the proposed measures may not be implemented soon enough.

Investing in Nature

In September, Link convened a seminar to explore innovative approaches to funding conservation. Hearing from five expert speakers, discussions ranged from identifying local natural capital, to working with international authorities to raise green bonds. Link continues to work with those that attended the seminar to establish future priorities and explore how Link and its members, with other partners, can best progress these initiatives.

Communications

A key element of Link's strategy is to improve communications across all of our work. This enables Link to maximise our collective impact and influence on Government policy, while also delivering tangible benefits for both our members and stakeholders across the environment and animal welfare sector as a whole.

A member survey at the end of 2016 made clear the importance to members of our joint external campaigning voice. As a result, in 2017 we worked to improve our reactive and fast-moving communications, and enhance our external campaigning voice, to amplify members' messages at key opportunities to inform and influence.

Strengthened media presence

Increasing Link's media presence and providing a strong joint media voice for the sector is an integral part of our communications strategy as it is vital in demonstrating a consistent and powerful voice for both our members and for wider civil society. In 2017, we secured widespread coverage for a number of issues that are important to our members and their supporters - such as ocean plastics, protecting wildlife-rich landscapes, wildlife crime and a 25 Year Environment Plan.

Trustees' Report (continued)

Journalists value Link's role in providing a joint voice for the sector. For example, following Link's statement on the Budget, issued jointly with our sister Links, the Science Editor of a broadsheet newspaper fed back that: '[the joint response] was really, really useful ...please do that again.' Members have also told us that the enhanced media work really benefits their own work.

A new and very effective approach has been to provide quote sheets with Link press releases. The quote sheets, in conjunction with rotating the organisations that we feature in the body of press releases, offer an opportunity for all members, regardless of size or capacity, to provide quotes for the media and to benefit from subsequent media coverage.

Link's most successful media story of the year was our analysis and publication of Christmas rubbish statistics, used to highlight the problem of plastic waste. Securing significant national and regional coverage, with around 53.2million opportunities to see the story, resulted in exposure of our concerns to a large proportion of the population. News coverage included: an interview on Sky News; articles in the Daily Mail, The Times, The Sun and around 200 regional and local newspapers; items on regional radio and in the trade press; and over 26,000 impressions on Twitter. The announcement of a four-point proposal from Defra on improving recycling coincided with the publication of our figures.

Other successful media initiatives include our response to the November Budget, which achieved coverage in the Daily Telegraph, Metro, City AM, and the Independent daily news brief, with publication of our Wildlife Crime report being reported as an exclusive by Channel 4 News.

Social media growth

Link's reach and influence on Twitter continues to grow. As a result of the Link team developing its expertise and investing time, we have strengthened the impact of using this communications platform, especially with regards to providing exposure for Link's collaborative work, and that of our members.

For example, the last quarter of 2017 saw Link achieve our highest number of tweet impressions, with 176,000 in December 2017 and 217,000 in January 2018. Increased activity in this period resulted from Link's Christmas waste news item, member blogs, and the launch of powerful reports including our Brexit Animal Welfare report, in collaboration with the UK Centre for Animal Law, the Wildlife Crime report and our joint sector responses to the 25 Year Plan and the November Budget. During this period, the Defra Secretary of State, Michael Gove, started following and retweeting Link on Twitter.

Across the whole year, impressions on Twitter soared by 89% to almost 1.7 million. Profile visits increased by 62% to over 56,000, mentions rose by 40%, and the number of new followers rose by 53%. Each tweet is also achieving greater impact, with a higher ratio of impressions and profile visits in relation to the number of tweets.

Website and Blogs

Following the launch of Link's new website at the end of 2015, visits rose sharply in 2016 and 2017 with page views up by 39% and unique page views up by 60%. The biggest identifiable single viewer of our site is Defra with 596 website sessions in 2017, up 59% from 2016.

The blog section of the Link website is a well-used and valued medium for members. The number of blogs featured has risen by 18% to 66 over the year, and member engagement is strong, with most blogs now offered by members rather than being sought by the Link team.

Link blogs cover a wide range of subjects in line with the interests of Link's members and our 11 working groups. Well-received externally, Link's tweets about member blogs are consistently the most retweeted and subject to the largest number of impressions. Two of our top three tweets this year referred to member blogs, with the other promoting Link's Annual Debate.

Influencing and stakeholder engagement

Through extensive stakeholder engagement in 2017, Link has continued to influence and build trust with a wide range of organisations and external agencies. These relationships allow Link to gather information and

Trustees' Report (continued)

intelligence to help inform and shape our collaborative work, strengthen the voice of the sector and, ultimately, increase impact for our members.

Link has influenced Government at the highest level through meeting with Ministers, senior civil servants and senior leadership teams of Government agencies. We have developed constructive relationships with external stakeholders in industry, such as water companies, industry regulators, lawyers, local authority bodies, farmers and their associated industry bodies, the Crown Estate and industry coalitions.

An area in which Link particularly excelled in 2017 is engagement and collaboration with other networks, especially in responding to Brexit. Link has formed alliances with like-minded coalitions whose expertise compliments that of Link's, such as Sustain, Greener UK, UK Centre for Animal Law, Unlock Democracy, UK Environmental Law Association and more. Forming these connections has allowed us to build consensus on key issues in a wider network than we would otherwise, and further strengthens and amplifies our messages to Government.

Structure, Governance and Management

Leadership

In 2017 Link saw the re-appointment of Nikki Williams (Head of Campaigns, Woodland Trust) as an Ordinary Trustee for a second term.

Link's Board of Trustees, and its Finance and Resources Sub Committee, each held four meetings during 2017, and an additional away day meeting in July.

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 7 December 1999 and registered as a charity on 5 January 2005. Members of the Board of Trustees are Directors for the purpose of Company Law and Trustees for the purpose of Charity Law. Members who served during the year, and up to the date of this report, are set out on Page 3.

The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. In 2007 the Memorandum and Articles of Association were reviewed, both to ensure compliance with the Companies Act (2006) and Charities Act (2006). Recognising the need to update the Articles, a further review was carried out in 2017 and the final consultation stages with members is expected to conclude in 2018.

Under the Articles, the members of the Board of Trustees are elected by a postal vote in advance or by secret ballot at the Annual General Meeting. Members of the Board of Trustees must retire at the third Annual General Meeting after that at which he or she was first elected, and are eligible for re-election for a further term ending on the sixth Annual General Meeting after their first election. The Treasurer must retire at the Annual General Meeting every three years but may stand for re-election with no maximum term of office.

Risk Management

Wildlife and Countryside Link views the management of risk as an integral element of its governance processes. The major risks to which the charity is exposed, as identified by Link's Director and Trustees, are reviewed annually with systems established to mitigate those risks. It is recognised that any control system can only provide reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that major risks have been adequately managed.

The two main risks and uncertainties that face the charity, as identified in the Risk Register, include risks to income and reputation. Link aims to mitigate these risks by scrutinising the finances through the Finance and Resources Sub-Committee, by diversifying our funding sources, horizon scanning with members, non-members and other stakeholders, and regularly communicating with our member organisations to ensure they are updated, engaged and benefitting from their membership of Link.

Protocols and procedures are adhered to by the Link team, with the finances being closely monitored to ensure expenditure is appropriate and within reasonable limits, and that adequate resources are in place.

Trustees' Report (continued)

Link's Communications Manager also works with our Director and Trustees to reduce potential risks to Link's reputation.

Pay Policy for senior staff

The Trustees consider that the Board of Trustees and the senior management team comprise the key management personnel of the charity in charge of directing and controlling, running and operating the Charity on a day-to-day basis. All trustees give of their time freely and no trustee received remuneration in the year. Details of trustees' expenses and related party transactions are disclosed in Note 6 to the accounts.

The pay of the senior staff is reviewed annually and normally increased in accordance with average earnings. In view of the nature of the charity, the Trustees benchmark against pay levels in other charities of a similar size. The remuneration benchmark is the mid-point of the range paid for similar roles adjusted for a weighting of up to 30% for any additional responsibilities. If recruitment has proven difficult in the recent past, a market addition is also paid, with the pay maximum no greater than the highest benchmarked salary for a comparable role.

Volunteers

Link continues to offer volunteering opportunities to people with a keen interest in Link issues. In 2017, we benefitted from the valuable help of Zara Ziauddin and Andrew McLean.

Volunteers contributed to Link's monthly e-bulletins and blogs, and helped with various Link meetings and events, such as the AGM. In addition, volunteers were provided the opportunity to become involved in the activities of Link's working groups by supporting meetings and campaign activities, gathering information and undertaking specific research projects.

Preparation of the report

This report has been prepared taking advantage of the small companies' exemption of section 415A of the Companies Act 2006.

Independent Examiner

A resolution to confirm the appointment of John Speed from JS2 as independent examiner to the organisation for a second consecutive year was passed at the Annual General Meeting in December 2017.

Exemptions from Disclosure

There are no exemptions required.

Funds held as custodian Trustee on behalf of others

Link does not have a custodian Trustee.

Trustees' Report (continued)

Financial Review

Here we summarise financial information to give an overview of the charity's financial performance during 2017, by using selected information from the full annual accounts. The full accounts are set out at page 16 and thereafter.

The 2017 accounts are showing that Link has improved its financial resilience during the year.

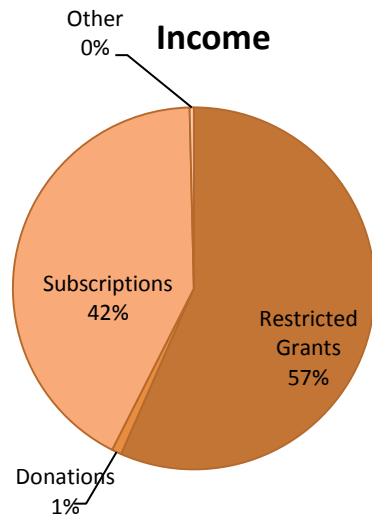


Figure 1: Summary of Link's income for 2017

During 2017 a number of restricted grants contributed towards funding the ongoing implementation of Link's five year Strategy 2015-19. Link's total income in 2017 (see fig 1) was £331,961 (2016 £208,604) with £187,862 (2016 £55,000) coming from grant making bodies. Subscriptions for the year totalled £139,948 (2016 £145,857).

Link's total expenditure (see fig 2) amounted to £290,588 (2016 £266,016) which resulted in a surplus of £41,373 (2016 deficit of £57,412) for the year. However, this was a planned surplus, as these additional funds will contribute to Links operations during 2018.

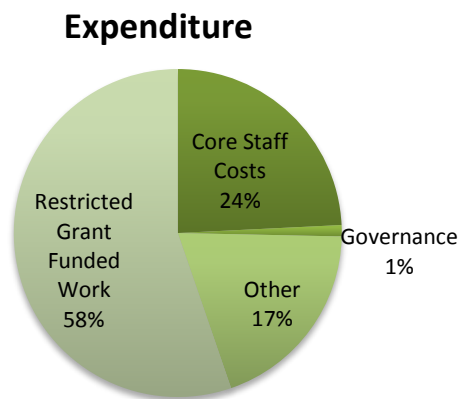


Figure 2: Summary of Link's expenditure in 2017

Total expenditure on staff costs are shown in note 5, which totalled £215,949 (£201,649 in 2016). At year end Link's staff members were in line with the budget. As in past years, this does not take account of the contribution made to Link's collaborative work by staff within our member organisations, who help us to achieve so much. These results show that Link has, and continues to, develop a secure financial model based on member subscriptions with a level of grants that allow Link to maximise its effectiveness for its members.

Reserves Policy

Link's Reserve policy is to maintain free reserves of six months operating expenditure, over a rolling period of three years. This allows Link's Board of Trustees to maximise the use of the financial reserves but demands a plan to achieve the policy. At 31 December 2017, free reserves (in the general fund) amounted to 6.5 months of total 2017 expenditure. This level of reserves will allow Link to continue to implement the current five year Strategy.

Trustees' Report (continued)

Grants

Link secured valuable grant funding in 2017 to support its work with members. In March, Link was awarded a two-year grant from the Calouste-Gulbenkian Foundation to support the Communications Manager post. Year one was match funded by the Kestrelman Trust, a first-time funder of Link, with a grant for year two being awarded in February 2018.

Link received a final instalment from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation in 2017, for a grant awarded in 2015 to aid delivery of Link's strategy 2015-19. These funds supported the Director and Head of Policy and Campaign's salaries.

In early 2017, Link secured a further three year grant from the John Ellerman Foundation, in support of Link's Marine Policy and Campaigns Manager post. In mid-2017, WWF-UK awarded Link £10,000 to support its Brexit work.

The other two posts at Link - Information and Policy Coordinator, and Policy and Campaigns Manager - continued to be funded through unrestricted core income, largely from member subscriptions. WWF-UK also provides grant support for Link's core policy work that helps the organisation deliver its own objectives, on areas such as illegal wildlife trade, the freshwater environment, agriculture, and marine and whales.

The four Links of Environment Links UK (Wildlife and Countryside Link, Wales Environment Link, Scottish Environment LINK and Northern Ireland Environment Link) also benefit from a WWF-UK grant, which supports their collaborative work across the UK.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all of those individuals and organisations that made 2017 a great year for Link, including our members, partners, funders and colleagues. With their generous support, we will continue to work hard in 2018 and beyond to conserve and protect wildlife and the countryside.

Preparation of the report

This report has been prepared taking advantage of the small companies' exemption of section 415A of the Companies Act 2006. It was approved, and authorised for issue, by the Trustees on 17 May 2018 and signed on its behalf by:

Dr Hazel Norman, Chair

Independent Examiners Report to the Members of Wildlife and Countryside Link

I report on the financial statements for the year to 31 December 2017 as set out on pages 16 to 25. This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters which I am required to state to them in an independent examiners report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to any party other than the charity and charity's trustees as a body, for my examination, for this report, or for the statement I have given below.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this period under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act") and that an independent examination is needed. The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

JOHN SPEED FCA FCIE

JS2 Limited
One Crown Square
Woking
Surrey
GU21 6HR

Statement of Financial Activities**For the year ended 31 December 2017****(Incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account)**

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2017 £	Restricted Funds 2017 £	Total Funds 2017 £	Total Funds 2016 £
INCOME					
Donations and legacies	2	2,895	-	2,895	6,290
Income from Charitable activities:					
Grants for project work	10	-	187,862	187,862	55,500
Subscriptions		139,948	-	139,948	145,857
Other trading activities:					
Income from investments		1,256	-	1,256	957
TOTAL INCOME		144,099	187,862	331,961	208,604
EXPENDITURE					
Expenditure on Charitable activities	3	112,016	178,572	290,588	266,016
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		112,016	178,572	290,588	266,016
Net income/(expenditure)		32,083	9,290	41,373	(57,412)
Transfers between funds	10	7,313	(7,313)	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		39,396	1,977	41,373	(57,412)
TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD		117,529	33,528	151,057	208,469
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		£ 156,925	£ 35,505	£ 192,430	£ 151,057

The annexed notes form part of these financial statements

Registered Company number 03889519

Balance Sheet

As at 31 December 2017

	Notes	£	2017 £	£	2016 £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	7		6,220		1
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	8	6,177		8,556	
Cash at bank and in hand		206,063		149,967	
		<u>212,240</u>		<u>158,523</u>	
CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year	9	(26,030)		(7,467)	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			<u>186,210</u>		<u>151,056</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			<u>192,430</u>		<u>151,057</u>
NET ASSETS			<u>£ 192,430</u>		<u>£ 151,057</u>
FUNDS					
Restricted funds			35,505		33,528
General fund (unrestricted)			156,925		117,529
			<u>£ 192,430</u>		<u>£ 151,057</u>

For the year ended 31 December 2017 the Company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- (i) The members have not required the Company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476;
- (ii) The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime. They were approved, and authorised for issue, by the directors on 17 May 2018 and signed on their behalf by:-

Dr Hazel Norman, Chair

David Lind, Treasurer

Statement of Cash Flows**As at 31 December 2017**

	£	2017 £	£	2016 £
CASH FLOWS FROM				
OPERATING ACTIVITIES:				
Net income/(expenditure) for the year	41,373		(57,412)	
Adjustments for:				
Depreciation charges	2,073		693	
Interest	(1,256)		(957)	
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	2,379		(783)	
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	18,563		1,293	
NET CASH (USED IN) PROVIDED BY				
OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		63,132		(57,166)
CASH FLOWS FROM				
INVESTING ACTIVITIES:				
Interest	1,256		957	
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(8,292)		-	
NET CASH PROVIDED BY (USED IN)				
INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		(7,036)		957
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		56,096		(56,209)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		149,967		206,176
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	£	<u>206,063</u>	£	<u>149,967</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2017

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparation of financial statements

These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102). The Charity is a public benefit entity for the purposes of FRS 102 and therefore has also prepared the financial statements 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 (The FRS 102 Charities SORP) and the Charities Act 2011.

The trustees have assessed whether the use of the going concern basis is appropriate and have considered possible events or conditions that might cast significant doubt on the ability of the Charity to continue as a going concern. The trustees have made this assessment for a period of at least one year from the date of approval of the financial statements. In particular, the trustees have considered the Charity's forecasts and projections. After making enquiries the trustees have concluded that there is a reasonable expectation that the Charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The Charity therefore continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing its financial statements.

Company status

The Charity is a company limited by guarantee. In the event of the Charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the Charity.

Fund accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes. The costs of raising such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Income

All income is included in the Statement of financial activities when the Charity has entitlement to the funds, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Subscription income from full and associate member organisations is invoiced on a calendar year basis and is recognised accordingly.

Grants are recognised as income in the Statement of financial activities in accordance with the terms attached by the grantor.

Income from recharged costs is accrued when the associated costs are incurred. Other donations and sundry income are recognised in the Statement of financial activities when received.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Expenditure

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been included under expense categories that aggregate all costs for allocation to activities. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular activities they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of the resources.

Governance costs are those incurred in connection with compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

All assets costing more than £1,000 are capitalised.

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following bases:

Fixtures and fittings -	4 years
Office equipment -	4 years

Operating leases

Rentals under operating leases are charged to the Statement of financial activities on a straight line basis over the lease term.

2. VOLUNTARY INCOME

	Unrestricted Funds 2017 £	Restricted Funds 2017 £	Total Funds 2017 £	Total Funds 2016 £
Donations	2,895	-	2,895	1,290
Grants for core funding	-	-	-	5,000
	<u>£ 2,895</u>	<u>£ Nil</u>	<u>£ 2,895</u>	<u>£ 6,290</u>

Voluntary income in 2016 consisted entirely of unrestricted income.

3. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES: FACILITATION, COORDINATION & INFORMATION PROVISION

	Unrestricted Funds 2017 £	Restricted Funds 2017 £	Total Funds 2017 £	Total Funds 2016 £
Staff costs	49,465	166,484	215,949	201,649
Support costs (see Note 4)	5,350	-	5,350	2,954
Other costs	57,201	12,088	69,289	61,413
	<u>£ 112,016</u>	<u>£ 178,572</u>	<u>£ 290,588</u>	<u>£ 266,016</u>

Expenditure includes:

	2017 £	2016 £
Rent	<u>25,009</u>	<u>25,207</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)**4. SUPPORT COSTS**

	Unrestricted Funds 2017 £	Restricted Funds 2017 £	Total Funds 2017 £	Total Funds 2016 £
GOVERNANCE:				
Independent examination	2,400	-	2,400	2,340
Trustee away day	577	-	577	294
Legal and professional fees	2,353	-	2,353	300
Other expenses	20	-	20	20
	<u>£ 5,350</u>	<u>£ Nil</u>	<u>£ 5,350</u>	<u>£ 2,954</u>

5. STAFF NUMBERS AND COSTS

	2017 £	2016 £
Wages and salaries	189,795	178,970
Social security costs	16,442	15,223
Pension costs	9,712	7,456
	<u>£ 215,949</u>	<u>£ 201,649</u>

	Number	Number
The average headcount during the year was as follows:	<u>5.9</u>	<u>5.7</u>

No employee received remuneration of more than £60,000 in the year or the previous year.

The key management personnel of the Charity comprise all staff members. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the Charity were as disclosed above.

6. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

During the year, no trustee received any remuneration (2016: Nil). One trustee was reimbursed for expenses in the year, amounting to £58 (2016: Nil).

Hazel Norman is the Executive Director of The British Ecological Society, and Chris Butler-Stroud is the Chief Executive of Whale and Dolphin Conservation. Both Charities are member organisations of Wildlife and Countryside Link. The member subscriptions for these organisations are calculated on the same basis as for other members.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

7. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Fixture and fittings £	Office equipment £	Total £
Cost			
At start of year	3,017	19,398	22,415
Additions	-	8,292	8,292
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31 December 2017	<u>3,017</u>	<u>27,690</u>	<u>30,707</u>
Depreciation			
At start of year	3,016	19,398	22,414
Charge for the year	-	2,073	2,073
At 31 December 2017	<u>3,016</u>	<u>21,471</u>	<u>24,487</u>
Net book value			
At 31 December 2016	£ 1	£ Nil	£ 1
At 31 December 2017	<u>£ 1</u>	<u>£ 6,219</u>	<u>£ 6,220</u>

8. DEBTORS

	2017 £	2016 £
Prepayments	5,085	8,556
Other debtors	1,092	-
	<u>£ 6,177</u>	<u>£ 8,556</u>

9. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2017 £	2016 £
Accruals	7,404	7,467
Deferred income	18,626	-
	<u>£ 26,030</u>	<u>£ 7,467</u>

Deferred income relates to subscription receipts relating to the following year.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

10. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

	Brought Forward 1 January 2017 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Carried Forward 31 December 2017 £
RESTRICTED FUNDS					
I Environment Links UK	3,485	-	(2,306)	-	1,179
II Common Agricultural Policy	887	988	(1,160)	-	715
III Marine Projects					
i) Phase II	2,506	-	-	(2,506)	-
ii) Phase III	16,398	23,601	(28,151)	(3,494)	8,354
iii) Marine Charter	917	-	(917)	-	-
IV Blueprint for Water	4,216	8,070	(3,985)	-	8,301
V Planning Coalition	289	-	-	-	289
VI Nature Check	716	-	(17)	(699)	-
VII ECN	17	-	-	(17)	-
VIII Strategic review	597	-	-	(597)	-
IX The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	-	115,000	(110,131)	-	4,869
X Communications manager	-	30,000	(18,509)	-	11,491
XI Wildlife Crime and Trade	3,500	203	(3,703)	-	-
XII Brexit Policy and Campaigns Officer	-	10,000	(9,693)	-	307
	33,528	187,862	(178,572)	(7,313)	35,505
GENERAL FUND	117,529	144,099	(112,016)	7,313	156,925
TOTAL FUNDS	£ 151,057	£ 331,961	£ (290,588)	£ Nil	£ 192,430

SUMMARY OF FUNDS IN THE PRIOR YEAR

	Brought forward 1 January 2016 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers and gains £	Carried forward 31 December 2016 £
Restricted funds	131,053	55,500	(153,025)	-	33,528
General fund	77,416	153,104	(112,991)	-	117,529
	£ 208,469	£ 208,604	£ (266,016)	£ Nil	£ 151,057

Purposes of restricted funds:

- I Environment Links UK
The WWF-UK Environment Links UK (ELUK) project grant supports the four Link organisations in the UK (Wildlife and Countryside Link, Wales Environment Link, Scottish Environment LINK and Northern Ireland Environment Link) in updating each other and collaborating on work programmes, key priorities, and operational matters, through meetings, email communications and conference calls. In 2017, £3,485 was carried over from 2016 and income to the fund in 2017 was £0. £2,306 was expended in 2017, with the primary expense being travel and venue hire for ELUK Director meetings. A surplus of £1,179 is carried over into 2018.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

II Common Agricultural Policy

This project relates to the activities of Link's Agriculture Working Group. £887 was carried over into 2017 and income to the fund in 2017 was £988. £1,160 was expended in 2017 on the design and printing of a policy briefing 'A Sustainable Farming and Land Management Policy for England'. A surplus of £715 is carried over into 2018.

III Marine Projects

i) MPCC Phase II

This relates to funding provided by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation towards the costs of a full time Marine and Policy Campaigns Coordinator. The project ended on 31 January 2014 and was immediately succeeded by the MPCM Phase III. In 2017 the remaining £2,506 left in this fund was transferred to MPCM Phase III in agreement with the funder.

ii) MPCC Phase III

This relates to funding from the John Ellerman Foundation towards the costs of a full time Marine Policy and Campaigns Coordinator at Wildlife and Countryside Link. From November 2015 the post title was changed to Marine Policy and Campaigns Manager (MPCM). Due to continuation funding from the John Ellerman Foundation, this project, originally running from January 2014 – January 2017, will now run from January 2014 to January 2020. This project fund provides for the salary and some associated expenses of the post. In 2017 the remaining £6,000 left in this fund was transferred to core funds in agreement with the funder.

iii) Marine Charter

This relates to funding from the MPA Fighting Fund, on behalf of the MPA Fighting Fund, towards the cost of the Marine Charter campaign which was active from February 2014. £917 was carried over to this fund from 2016. £917 was expended in 2017 on website hosting and refunding the Wildlife Trusts the unspent funds from 2016.

IV Blueprint for Water

The Blueprint for Water project was set up in 2009 to fund the publication and distribution of the Blueprint coalition's third report. £4,216 was carried forward into 2017 from 2016 and income in 2017 was £9,726. £3,948 of the fund was spent in 2017 on the Blueprint for PR19 campaign. £8,301 has been carried forward into 2018.

V Planning Coalition

The Planning Coalition fund was set up in 2010 to cover costs associated with the publication and distribution of the new Greenest Planning Ever Coalition's 'Vision for the Future of Planning' report. £289 was carried over into 2017. No funds have been spent since 2014 and £289 has been carried forward into 2018.

VI Nature Check

The Nature Check fund was set up in 2011 to cover the costs associated with assessment, reporting and launch of project findings on the Coalition Government's performance on the natural environment, as part of its commitment to be the "greenest Government ever". £715 was carried over into 2017. The remaining funds (£715) was transferred to core funds and the project closed, in agreement with the funder.

VII Ecologically Coherent Network

This fund relates to funding from WWF-UK for Link's Ecologically Coherent Network (MPA Fighting Fund) project. No funds have been spent since 2014. £17 was transferred to core funds in 2017 and the project closed in agreement with the funder.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

VIII Strategic Review

The Strategic Review fund was set up in 2014 to fund the development of a new five year strategy for Wildlife and Countryside Link. Link funded the project with grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund's Catalyst grants scheme and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. No funds have been spent since 2014. £597 was transferred in 2017 in agreement with the funder.

IX The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

In 2015, Link received a proportion of a two-year grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, secured to support implementation of Link's five-year strategy. £115,000 was received in 2017 and £110,131 was spent. £4,869 will be carried over to 2018.

X Communications Manager

This is the Kestrelman and Gulbenkian grants which are used to fund the role of communications manager (Bernard and Adler). £30,000 was received in 2017 and the expenditure was £18,509. £11,491 will be carried over to 2018.

XI Wildlife Crime and Trade

This fund supports the work of Link's Wildlife Crime and Trade Working Group. £3,500 was carried forward into 2017 from 2016 and income in 2017 was £203. £3,703 was spent in 2017 on the preparation of the Group's 'Recording wildlife crime' report meaning that there were no funds carried forward into 2018.

XII Brexit Policy and Campaigns Officer

This is a grant from WWF-UK to fund the post of Brexit Policy and Campaigns Officer. £10,000 was received in 2017 and expenditure was £9,693. £307 will be carried over to 2018.

11. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
Tangible fixed assets	6,220	-	6,220
Net current assets	150,705	35,505	186,210
	<u>£ 156,925</u>	<u>£ 35,505</u>	<u>£ 192,430</u>

12. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

At the year end the Charity had total commitments under the non-cancellable operating lease on its premises repayable as follows:

	2017 £	2016 £
Operating leases which expire:		
within one year	14,889	14,889
within two to five years	19,580	34,469
	<u>£ 34,469</u>	<u>£ 49,358</u>