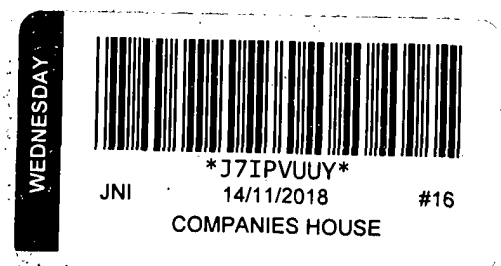


Ulster Wildlife Trust

Trustees' Annual Report **(Incorporating the Directors' Report)** **& Accounts 2017/18**



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Foreword from our Chairman

Against a backdrop where we have had no devolved administration since January 2017 and a severe lack of clarity of the impact of Brexit on the environment, it is of vital importance that Ulster Wildlife continues to be a leading independent advocate on all environmental matters affecting Northern Ireland.

I am pleased to report that Ulster Wildlife had a very successful 2017/18, a year which saw the strengthening of our team, a strong financial performance and a significant increase in the influence of the charity. Our membership continues to grow, as does the scope and variety of the projects we are engaged in.

Our Red Squirrels conservation project continued to develop and delivered its first NI-wide squirrel and pine marten survey, our Grassroots Challenge Project continued working with thousands of young people across the country and our very successful Magnificent Meadows project finished its first phase with plans for more funding in the pipeline.

Additionally, the organisation is heavily involved in lobbying for the protection of healthy badgers, marine conservation zones for Northern Ireland and for the protection of our bog areas.

Health and Well-being

We do still face significant challenges locally. Whilst air quality in Northern Ireland is improving, only 37% of our rivers and waterways are EU compliant and the level of ammonia in the atmosphere is giving cause for concern. Ulster Wildlife is developing its work to promote the physical well-being benefits of being out in nature and has a priority interest in using environmental activities to promote improved mental health.

Achieving a balanced economy

Its 'green' image is of vital importance to the Northern Ireland economy. Tourism and the agri-food sector are significant areas of our economy and it is of utmost importance for both sectors that we promote a green, sustainable image.

Ulster Wildlife has been working through the 'Nature Matters NI' coalition to advocate for adequate public funding for an agricultural support system which ensures a sustainable farming industry, rewarding farmers and land managers fairly for the essential environmental services they provide to society.

Protecting the Environment

Whilst we have committed ourselves in Northern Ireland to the EU's 2020 Biodiversity Strategy and our own Executive's Programme for Government has put a high priority on the environmental sector, the funds allocated have been minimal. Without the benefit of the carrier bag levy, Ulster Wildlife would have experienced funding problems. We will continue to seek appropriate funding for our sector and demonstrate the need and impact that funding can make.

At Ulster Wildlife, we will continue to work constructively with farmers, fishermen and business to further our mutual goals of sustainable land and sea use. We will engage with both our Members and the general public on the protection of rare habitats and species. Our work on protecting our historic landscapes and seascapes will accelerate as will our educational programmes with our younger citizens.

I would like to thank our Trustees who continue to dedicate their time and expertise to the charity, along with our Honorary President – Joe Furphy OBE. I also would like to acknowledge and pay tribute to Roy Ramsay, who was Chair of Ulster Wildlife until he stood down from the Board in November 2017 and was then appointed to the honorary role of Vice-President. Very sadly Roy passed away in early 2018, he will be a huge loss to the charity and our thoughts are with his family and friends.

Our Members are of vital importance to the organisation. They now number over 12,500 which gives us a significant voice with Government. Their voluntary efforts make an important contribution to the amount of work we can complete and the status of our sites. Their financial contribution enables us to support the environment where no other forms of grant support are available. Thank you - you are indeed the lifeblood of Ulster Wildlife.

Ken Brundle
Chairman

Roy Ramsay

A Tribute

It was with a huge sense of shock that we learnt of the sudden death of our Vice-President Roy Ramsay, after a short illness in early 2018.

I had known Roy for many years – we had been colleagues in what became NIEA. Roy stood out as extremely conscientious, highly knowledgeable not only about his own discipline, but also of the work being carried out in other sections of the Agency – and so he was ideally suited to eventually become its Chief Executive.

When it came time for him to retire, it seemed to some of us that he would make an ideal Ulster Wildlife Council member – and we were delighted when he readily accepted. We were even more delighted when he became Chairman, where all his knowledge and skills were at our disposal. The Ulster Wildlife Chairman is usually also a member of the Council of the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts, and there his talents were quickly recognised and he played an important role as the Chair of the Audit Committee.

At his well-attended funeral service, we learnt a great deal more about Roy than we had ever imagined – his son's tribute let us hear of many other outside interests – his singing, his choice of holiday locations, his work with Rotary and his love of good food – and many more!

However, all this does not do proper justice to a man who was my good friend and colleague. Roy exemplified all that is best in humanity – his impeccable behaviour, his understanding of the natural world and how we can improve it, his good humour, his readiness to help, his management skills and the ease with which others felt they could deal with him.

Pat and his sons will miss him and to them we send our deepest sympathy. Ulster Wildlife will miss him, and so will I – he was one of those really good people who leave an indelible impression on everyone with whom they come in contact – and I am privileged to have been one of those people for over thirty years.

Thank you, Roy

Joe Furphy OBE
Honorary President

Nature Matters

For 40 years Ulster Wildlife has been driven and supported by people who believe that wildlife and wild places are important. Nature brings a host of benefits for society - it is fundamental to human well-being and underpins a sustainable economy. We are a local charity that champions native wildlife. We work with local people to secure space for nature in our countryside, towns, coastlines and seas.

Our long-term vision is for a Northern Ireland with:

‘...a healthy, well cared for natural environment which contributes to enjoyment, quality of life, prosperity, health & well-being’.

Ulster Wildlife’s charitable objectives as set out in our Articles of Association are -

- (1) The advancement of environmental protection and improvement, in particular the conservation of all aspects of Northern Ireland and its adjacent areas’ wildlife, biodiversity, geodiversity and associated natural beauty for the benefit of present and future generations by:
 - (a) safeguarding, maintaining and enhancing natural biodiversity and geodiversity through the management of nature reserves (however entitled or however established);
 - (b) practising, advocating, encouraging, influencing, advising and campaigning for best conservation practice involving land, sea and freshwater management practice in ways that favour biodiversity, geodiversity, ecosystem health, sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable development;
 - (c) undertaking action, independently or in partnership, to protect threatened habitats, sites of geodiversity or heritage significance, at local, national or international levels on or in water, land and adjacent seas;
 - (d) taking account of other aspects of the natural heritage on which wildlife is dependent or to which it contributes, including landforms and landscapes;
 - (e) improving the quality of life of people through supporting a biodiversity, ecosystem, geodiversity and sustainability-led approach to the management and design of the natural and built environment.
- (2) The advancement of education by raising the public’s awareness and knowledge of all aspects of the natural and built heritage, biodiversity and geodiversity of Northern Ireland and its adjacent areas by promoting, undertaking and co-operating in research and gathering and sharing information on these topics.
- (3) The advancement of citizenship through volunteering linked to natural heritage including the promotion of sustainable food production and sustainable lifestyles.
- (4) The advancement of the arts, culture, heritage and science linked to natural heritage through events and project-based action.
- (5) The advancement of health and wellbeing through activities linked to the natural environment.

Our Charitable Objectives are delivered through the two Strategic Themes of Living Landscapes and Living Seas.

Our work to achieve Living Landscapes and Seas is delivered annually focused around five strategic goals.

Our Living Landscapes work is about:

- Working with people and communities to restore damaged and fragmented habitats, reconnecting these and linking them to the green space in our cities, towns and villages.
- Securing a society where people are inspired by, and engaged in, protecting wildlife and where they recognise the economic and social value of nature, and the many ways in which it improves their quality of life.

Our Living Seas work is about:

- Helping wildlife and habitats to recover from past decline as our use of the seas' resources becomes environmentally sustainable.
- Inspiring people about marine wildlife and to value the sea for the many ways in which it supports our quality of life.
- Creating a network of marine protected areas as part of a long-term solution to the management of healthy seas.

Our Priorities for 2017/18

This was the fifth year of delivery under our current Corporate Strategy 'Wildlife in Trust' which runs until the end of March 2020.

Our Five strategic goals are:

1. **Inspire people** to champion wildlife and value nature.
2. **Protect and restore habitats and ecosystems** through practical action and research.
3. **Stand up for nature** by influencing government policy.
4. **Promote health and well-being** through enjoyment of the natural environment.
5. **Grow our success** and extend our reach.

Our Fundraising targets for 2017/18 were:

- > To secure at least 12,700 members or regular supporters.
- > To secure £375,979 income from Membership including Gift-Aid contributions.

Public Benefit

The Trustees have taken into account the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aim and objectives and in planning our future activities.

This Trustees' Report shows how we performed against these Strategic Goals and Targets in 2017/18.

At a Glance...2017/18

Over

100,000

visits to our nature reserves

Over

10,100

young people engaged in
nature education sessions

25km

of coastline surveyed

Over

11,500

volunteer hours
contributed

209

bags of
rubbish collected at
beach cleans

102

NI Priority
Species cared for on
our nature reserves

682

hectares of nature
reserves managed

Over

280

landowners benefiting
from advice

237

woodlands
surveyed for
squirrels

12,784

members supporting our work

Over

2,100

people attended our
wildlife events

Over

60,000

people engaged with
nature at shows, fairs
and festivals

123

sites

surveyed for barn owls

Inspire people to champion wildlife and value nature

We believe that in order to protect Northern Ireland's diverse landscapes and seas, and secure a future rich in wildlife, we must invest resources into re-engaging people with nature and educating our society to value the environment as a vital investment in our future health, well-being and economy.

Education

Inspiring the next generation of nature lovers is of vital importance and we continued to spread the word about local wildlife and wild places with our young people during 2017/18.

We delivered hundreds of environmental education sessions with Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Special Schools and Young Farmers Clubs across Northern Ireland with over 10,000 interactions with young people during the year.

Through our ParkLife project we ran six Saturday Clubs for young people in Belfast City Council Parks across Belfast. We also worked with 40 Primary Schools across Belfast and delivered nature-based activities at 17 Fun Days in parks during the summer of 2017, engaging with thousands of local people. A highlight of the year proved to be the independent pilot evaluation of the school's strand of the programme undertaken by Queen's University Belfast. This evidenced that ParkLife is a very positive experience for the children benefiting from the service. The study showed that children engaged in ParkLife programme subsequently spent more time engaging with nature, are more connected to the environment and know more about their local park. QUB concluded that the children participating in ParkLife were more positive about their general connection to nature, their empathy for wildlife, their sense of oneness with nature, their responsibility for nature and their enjoyment of nature. Very positive results with a long term impact.

Our Grassroots Challenge Project worked directly with 366 pupils across 18 post primary Special Schools helping them to improve their understanding of wildlife and to take action in their school grounds. We held 72 sessions with these schools over the year and carried out activities including biodiversity surveys, wildflower planting, tree planting and making bird feeders. As part of this work, small grants for school grounds improvement projects were issued to nine Special Schools across Northern Ireland.

We also completed Year One of an 'Environmental Leadership Programme' with four Secondary Schools in the Larne and Carrickfergus areas, in conjunction with our Corporate Partner AES. Year Two commenced in September 2017 and sees us working with seven local Secondary Schools, to engage young people in their local environment and encourage them to take action in their local communities for wildlife.

Ulster Wildlife also continued to support two Wildlife Watch Groups in Lisburn and Belfast, run by dedicated volunteer leaders, where children meet monthly to carry out fun and engaging nature-based activities.

Events

In 2017/18, Ulster Wildlife ran over 75 events for the public - offering a wide range of ways for people to get involved and learn more about wildlife near them.

Events included talks, walks, rambles and clean-ups across the whole of Northern Ireland with over 2,100 people attending our events in 2017/18. Our events included five beach cleans, nine snorkel safaris with 78 young people getting to experience our sealife up-close and personal, four rockpool rambles and five red squirrel safaris across Northern Ireland.

We also received funding through the West Belfast PCSP to run a programme of events at Bog Meadows including a week-long summer camp for young nature lovers and a nature inspired family fun day at the end of summer 2017.

Training

During 2017/18, we continued to deliver our Heritage Lottery-funded project - Skills for Living Landscapes and Seas.

At the end of 2017 we saw our final seven trainees from the project successfully complete their year of training with Ulster Wildlife. Throughout the three-year programme we have provided 18 year-long traineeships with 38 accredited courses completed during the project. We also partnered with seven other NGOs to provide placement experiences for our trainees during their year. Fourteen of the trainees have progressed on to gain employment in the conservation sector upon completion of the traineeship with organisations including National Trust, RSPB and Ulster Wildlife.

In March 2018, we welcomed seven new trainees under our new Heritage Lottery funded project – 'Nature Skills NI'. We'll be particularly seeking to recruit trainees from underrepresented groups including people from ethnic minority backgrounds, those with a disability and non- graduates under the age of 24. The project will continue to deliver high quality training and a bespoke year of on-the-job learning for the trainees.

Our Grassroots Challenge Project worked with 1,799 young people through the Young Farmers Clubs of Ulster network delivering engaging wildlife education and training events throughout Northern Ireland. A new Lantra-Approved 'Conservation on the Farm NI' training course was introduced and eight Young Farmers Clubs registered to complete their Bronze level Keep NI Beautiful Eco Club Award. Awards were presented to young people by TV presenter, broadcaster and author Simon King as part of the first Annual Grassroots Challenge Celebration event held at W5 in Belfast, in November 2017.

Six people took part in our Living Seas Champion training days, where they learnt marine species identification, techniques for conducting citizen science surveys, and skills for safely running an engagement event. Our Living Seas Champions now have 12 months in which to conduct two of their own citizen science surveys and run two marine awareness events in their local area.

Also during the year we delivered 13 survey training workshops for our Barn Owl and Squirrel Surveys, 10 Lantra courses on grey squirrel control and several training days on how to carry out shoreline surveys.

Volunteering

Volunteers are critical to our work and to the successful delivery of our aims and objectives.

Volunteers and the 'citizen science' they support provide a huge contribution across Ulster Wildlife. They help on our nature reserves, support our wildlife surveys, as well as providing much-needed support to our fundraising efforts.

Over 10,000 volunteer hours were given in 2017/18 to support our conservation efforts. We work hard to ensure a positive and welcoming volunteering environment for everyone and aim to provide more high quality volunteering opportunities across our work into the future.

Our Grassroots Challenge Project also supported Duke of Edinburgh's Award leaders and young people to engage in 17 local projects benefiting wildlife and the environment. Further volunteering took place during a week-long Gold Award Residential that we ran at Ardaluin House near Newcastle. A Wildlife Expedition Pack was launched enabling young people to have wildlife observation and recording as the focus of their Award Expedition.

Protect and restore habitats and ecosystems through practical action and research

We continue to promote the restoration of natural systems to provide maximum benefit for native species, habitats and people. This work centres around the protection and good management of core, high-nature-value sites, and seeks to promote habitat connectivity and wildlife corridors to form the basis of ecological networks within our landscapes and seas. We use our local presence and knowledge to carry out practical habitat management work, and assist others in doing so.

Nature Reserves

During 2017/18, Ulster Wildlife continued to manage and protect a suite of 18 Nature Reserves covering 682 hectares of land. These special places are managed for nature and people across Northern Ireland. They are home to at least 102 NI Priority Species and 19 NI Priority Habitats.

A wide range of activities are carried out throughout the year including species and habitat monitoring, practical habitat management and access maintenance.

One of the largest conservation projects ever to take place on one of our Nature Reserves commenced at Umbra in partnership with DAERA in late 2017. A total of 3.5 hectares of non-native conifer trees was removed from the site – this will greatly benefit the habitats of national importance found here such as the humid dune slacks and species-rich dune grassland.

Over the winter of 2017/18, we began our Biffa Award-funded Seabird Recovery Project at the Isle of Muck – the core of the project was the removal of invasive rats from the island, which were preying on the seabirds' eggs and young. This work was completed in early 2018 and will now be followed in the summer and autumn of 2018 by bracken and scrub control to provide more nesting habitat for breeding birds.

Other regular activities included grassland management at sites such as Straidkilly and Balloo as well as scrub control at sites like Ballynahone Bog, Inishargy Bog, Umbra and Slievenacloy. We also work closely with conservation graziers at several of our sites to ensure that our grassland habitats are maintained in good condition through the use of cattle and sheep.

Invasive species control is a major activity for the nature reserves team - non-native invasives managed during 2017/18 included Himalayan balsam, rhododendron, Japanese knotweed, Himalayan honeysuckle and sycamore. Additionally, funding was secured from the Landfill Communities Fund to remove the non-native and highly invasive sea buckthorn from Umbra Nature Reserve. Follow-up works will include more sea buckthorn control as well as the removal of clematis that it is colonising the dune grassland. The works ensure that these habitats are not overrun by non-native species and that native wildlife can flourish.

Floating Pennywort, an aquatic invasive plant, was removed from the pond at Balloo Woodland in early 2018 – monitoring will now take place to ensure its complete eradication and to prevent re-growth.

A wide range of habitat and species monitoring is undertaken during the year to inform site management and input into national surveys that give a wider picture on how a range of species are doing across the UK and Ireland.

Species and habitat monitoring included: vegetation surveys at Feystown, Straidkilly and Umbra, bird surveys at Isle of Muck and Ballynahone, butterfly and moth recording at Slievenacloy and Glenarm as well as a wide range of other activities such as pond-dipping and using camera traps.

National Recording Schemes that Ulster Wildlife contributes to or facilitates include: the BTO Constant Effort Sites Scheme, the United Kingdom Butterfly Monitoring Scheme, the National Moth Recording Scheme, National Moth Night and the JNCC Seabird Monitoring Programme.

Protected Areas

During 2017/18, we continued to work in partnership with the Ministry of Defence to secure management of the Ballykinler and Magilligan SACs for conservation.

Mapping of the scrub at Ballykinler in particular has led to significantly increased investment in scrub control with removal of 4.5 ha of gorse and treatment of 6 ha of young sea buckthorn with further work planned for 2018/19. Having a Conservation Officer in place has also increased the supervision of contractors undertaking conservation work and graziers, which has paid dividends during the year, and our work with forward planning for repairs to the very significant fencing assets at both sites will begin to be addressed in 2018/19. Community involvement has been reinvigorated with the community conservation groups for both sites meeting for the first time in three years to facilitate input from individuals and groups to how the sites are managed. We have also begun survey work of small eggar and scarce crimson and gold moths, marsh fritillaries and rabbits which we plan to continue in the longer term.

Our nature reserves team continued to work in partnership with Copeland Bird Observatory members to support the management of the Copeland Islands Special Protection Area (SPA) just off the coast from Donaghadee in Co. Down. Grassland management and invasive species works continued for the range of bird species found here including Manx shearwater and Arctic tern.

Ulster Wildlife is one of the main delivery partners on the Collaborative Action for the Natura Network (CANN) project which is a partnership of experts in the field of conservation across the three jurisdictions of Northern Ireland, Ireland and Scotland, working to protect local peatlands and wetlands. The project is funded by the EU through the Interreg VA programme.

During the year, preparatory work was undertaken for the development of Conservation Action Plans on nine sites, all of which are Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). Contact was made with landowners and community stakeholders, vegetation surveys commenced and evidence was gathered to inform the development of the management plans over the next three years.

Scoping studies were also undertaken for Cuilcagh Mountain SAC to underpin a stage II Interreg application, identifying the priorities for actions on this upland site which is one of our largest expanses of blanket bog bounded by limestone grassland and montane habitats. A successful outcome would expand the scope of the work which will be undertaken to move the cross-border site towards favourable condition status.

We continued working with our corporate partner AES UK & Ireland in 2017/18 - supporting the management of their lands at Kilroot and Ballylumford power stations both located beside protected sites - Belfast Lough and Larne Lough Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). The AES 'Biodiversity Action Plan' was launched in June 2017.

Landscape-scale Projects

Save our Magnificent Meadows was a three-year initiative led by Plantlife and delivered in Northern Ireland by Ulster Wildlife from July 2014 to November 2017. The project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, worked to transform the fortunes of vanishing wildflower meadows, grasslands and wildlife.

Nearly 7.5 million acres of wildflower meadow have been lost across the UK. They are not only an intrinsic part of our natural environment, they are also rich in landscape character, social customs, folklore and history. Despite the loss of the vast majority of these habitats in Northern Ireland, a significant proportion of what remains can be found in Fermanagh and west Tyrone. For the past three years Ulster Wildlife's Save our Magnificent Meadows project has been working to protect and restore our precious purple-moor grass and rush pastures and lowland meadows as well as all the spectacular species that rely upon them.

Since 2014, we have restored 21 hectares, improved 220 hectares and supported 233 landowners with a total of 4000 hectares of these incredible habitats with advice and equipment. We have also run events and training for almost 3,500 people. We have worked with primary and secondary schools to create mini meadows and delivered a road verge campaign to encourage sympathetic management of roadside species rich grassland.

A spin-off from the Save our Magnificent Meadows project was the Ballynacor Sewage Lagoons project where we co-ordinated a conservation project to remediate almost 20 acres of former sewage lagoon with NI Water and recreate species rich grassland where the lagoons once stood. The newly created meadow really began to flourish this year. During autumn 2017, the meadow received its first cut and some additional management through the introduction of more yellow rattle. To date the project has been nominated for two national awards.

June 2017 saw the welcome introduction of the new Environmental Farming Scheme (EFS) by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

This rewards farmers and landowners for managing designated sites and priority habitats to move them towards favourable condition status. Designated sites such as Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Areas of Special Scientific Interest are all eligible to apply for the funding to carry out improvement and/or restoration works on their land. Each applicant develops a bespoke EFS plan for the designated sites they own or manage with the help of a planner.

During the year, one staff member became an EFS planner, drawing up plans for the management of over 2500 ha of designated sites in Fermanagh and Tyrone in partnership with the landowners/managers. In partnership with DAERA, we also piloted a Group Facilitation Initiative. This has proved to be very popular and 60 farmers and landowners have joined the Group during its first year which is very encouraging. The EFS Group Initiative:

- Encourages co-ordinated action among farmers in the project area.
- Provides ongoing support, advice and Master Classes for those farmers.
- Encourages other farmers in the area to apply to join EFS.
- Carries out monitoring and reporting on the project.

Species Action

The Red Squirrels United (RSU) project is now 18 months in and we have made significant progress during this time.

RSU which is funded by EU Life14 and Heritage Lottery Fund, is the biggest ever partnership of academics, practitioners and volunteers working together on a scientifically robust programme of red squirrel conservation across the UK. It is led by The Wildlife Trusts in collaboration with eight partners including community organisations, Newcastle University and Forest Research.

In Northern Ireland, Ulster Wildlife works with landowners, local communities and local red squirrel groups in four of the last remaining red squirrel strongholds in the Mourne, Broughshane and Ballygally, Fermanagh and the North West to help prevent further spread of grey squirrels through conservation and community engagement activities. The project is finalising an eradication attempt of grey squirrels from the Mourne Mountains and is also supporting red squirrel populations by controlling greys around the Broughshane and Braid Valley.

During 2017/18, we undertook a Northern Ireland-wide survey of red squirrels and pine marten and have had some very surprising results, particularly red squirrels in the City Cemetery in L/Derry and pine marten in urban Belfast. These results are available from our website and inform our efforts to set up volunteer groups dedicated to the conservation of red squirrels. New conservation groups are currently in the formative stages of being set up, these are located in North Down, Rostrevor, west Tyrone and Cityside in L/Derry.

Our Be There for Barn Owls project has continued to engage with the community, create and erect barn owl boxes and increase our understanding of the barn owl here in Northern Ireland.

Over the past year we have produced, distributed and erected 20 barn owl boxes focusing on core barn owl habitat around Co. Down and the shores of Lough Neagh. A national survey of erected boxes and other sites found that we now have two barn owl boxes being used by barn owls and identified another 25 long eared owl breeding sites. We are monitoring the boxes and other nest sites using a network of nest minders to ascertain breeding success. All of this information is fed into an Ulster Wildlife report for Barn Owl Conservation which can be downloaded from our website and into the State of the UK Barn Owl report on barn owl breeding success and volunteering effort. In addition we have been able to create barn owl 'heat maps' for where the species is most likely to be found based on historic sighting data, precipitation data and habitat data - this is now used to target survey and conservation work.

During 2017 we completed the 'development phase' of our Sea Deep Project and submitted a successful stage two application for funding to Heritage Lottery Fund.

This new shark conservation project, which will commence in April 2018, will see us working alongside sea anglers, schools and community groups, to help safeguard the future of our endangered sharks, skates and rays.

Stand up for nature by influencing government policy

We believe that there is great urgency in achieving sustainability in how we use natural resources, and in safeguarding biodiversity. Our work with politicians and decision makers seeks to get a better deal for nature. We will contribute to emerging government policy, raising awareness of biodiversity, ecosystem services and natural capital.

Marine Protection

The lack of a Stormont Executive from January 2017 and the uncertainty on the future marine legislative framework after Brexit, particularly around marine nature protection and fisheries has been a focus for our marine policy work through the Northern Ireland Marine Taskforce (NIMTF).

Ulster Wildlife is one of the lead partners in the NIMTF, a coalition of 10 NGOs working for better marine protection in our local seas, and employs its Marine Policy Officer funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. We have taken the opportunity to carry out more in depth research into examples of best practice in fisheries policy development from Australia, New Zealand and Canada. We also focused on researching what best practice would look like for a NI Marine Plan in anticipation of the plan being released for consultation in early 2018. As part of a NI Environment Sector delegation, we also provided evidence at Brexit inquiries to both the UK and Irish Governments.

Badgers and Bovine TB

In early 2018, we spent significant time researching and putting together our response to DAERA's consultation on a Bovine Tuberculosis (bTB) Eradication Strategy for Northern Ireland. The Department's proposals for wildlife intervention include 'blanket' culling of all badgers in a central zone of a size of approx 100km² each in a number of bTB hot spots, and 'Test-Vaccinate-Remove' (TVR) intervention (i.e. euthanizing badgers that test-positive with advanced TB and vaccinating test-negative badgers) in a buffer zone to mitigate perturbation.

Whilst we were in broad agreement with the proposals outlined, we do not support the culling of healthy badgers as part of a wildlife intervention strategy. We recognise that bTB is a complex and costly disease and causes economic hardship to the farming community and the need to find the right mechanisms to control it. However, we do not believe that a 'blanket' badger cull in bTB hotspots is the answer.

Our detailed consultation response is available on our website. Our key points were:

- Healthy badgers should NOT be culled as part of any wildlife intervention strategy.
- A combination of 'Test Vaccinate Remove' intervention and badger vaccination are the most ethical approach in terms of a wildlife intervention strategy.
- Legislation needs to be introduced urgently to allow laypersons to be trained in badger vaccination.
- We welcome the greater focus on cattle testing, biosecurity improvements and improvements to herd health.
- Further research is needed to understand and better inform future policy.

Environment Policy Post-Brexit

In spring 2017, Ulster Wildlife joined forces with a coalition of environmental NGOs in Northern Ireland to help secure the best future for our environment post-Brexit.

Leaving the EU is a pivotal moment, providing an opportunity to protect, restore and enhance NI's environment through the creation of new sustainable agriculture and fisheries policies to benefit our environment, communities and economy.

The Coalition has developed a campaign 'Nature Matters NI' to influence and inform policy makers, political representatives and the public.

At the end of September 2017, the coalition held its first conference at Greenmount which brought together farmers, academics, economists, eNGOs and the wider food and farming community to help inform how a new sustainable, agricultural land use policy could deliver for farming, food and nature post-Brexit.

Members of the coalition, including Ulster Wildlife's CEO, also visited Brussels to voice our concerns to MEPs and the Article 50 Task Force about the impact Brexit may have on crucial cross-border cooperation to protect the environment and to emphasise the importance of maintaining common environmental standards across the entire island.

Promote health and well-being through enjoyment of the natural environment

Access to, and enjoyment of, wild places and wildlife has been shown to have a positive impact on our physical and emotional well-being and is important for people of all ages both in terms of preventing illness, and managing health conditions. Ulster Wildlife continues to provide opportunities to engage with nature and believes it is an important factor in achieving a healthy society.

Promoting Nature as a Tool to Improve Health

During 2017/18, we continued to promote our nature reserves as places to enjoy the natural environment and to gain the positive effects of being outdoors in nature. Our nature reserves can act as green gyms, a place to engage with other people and a form of therapy – it has been shown that being out in nature improves both our physical and mental well-being. We provide access to local green spaces through our nature reserves and manage 7.8 km of access paths throughout the year.

By winter 2017, we had completed the majority of works to improve the access points for the local community at Bog Meadows Nature Reserve, in west Belfast. We have submitted a planning application to install a converted shipping container classroom on site which will allow us to provide many more activities for people at the nature reserve. The works aim to be completed by the end of 2018 and are funded by the Alpha Programme which distributes funding through the Landfill Communities Fund to a range of community and biodiversity projects within a 10 mile radius of Mullaghglass Landfill site, on the outskirts of Belfast. We aim to develop more health and well-being activities on the site including cycling and mindfulness walks.

Visitor numbers to our nature reserves with visitor counters show that they are very well used by the local community. During 2017/18, Bog Meadows had over 55,000 visits, Balloo over 25,000 visits and Slievenacloy over 9,500 visits.

We also provide opportunities for people to get active while learning about wildlife at guided walks across our sites. During 2017/18 we held a programme of events at Bog Meadows including guided walks, camp outs, bushcraft and a bat night.

In early 2018, we worked with NI Environment Link and Natural Capital Solutions Ltd to complete a 'Natural Capital' study of Bog Meadows which showed that the nature reserve provides physical health benefits worth almost half a million pounds annually.

Ulster Wildlife's practical work days on our nature reserves provide a chance for our volunteers to get their green gym experience while also learning new skills and meeting other like-minded people. We supported 729 volunteer days on our nature reserves in 2017/18 – that equates to over 5,000 one-hour outdoor gym sessions!

We also continued to work with Caring Breaks during 2017/18 to engage their clients in nature through an allotment project in the Castlereagh Hills.

Grow our success and extend our reach

As a locally governed charity, we will develop our committed, skilled and knowledgeable staff and volunteer base. We will continue to extend our reach in terms of fundraising to deliver impacts for nature and ensure we make the most efficient and effective use of our resources.

Teamwork for Wildlife

Ulster Wildlife is only as effective as our staff and volunteers, so we focus on developing our people and providing a positive working environment to ensure we retain our highly skilled and dedicated team. During 2017/18, we rolled out a Health & Well-being Programme for our staff in the office.

At the end of 2017/18 we had 43 employed staff and 317 registered volunteers all working together to achieve our vision.

Landfill Communities Fund

Ulster Wildlife celebrated its twentieth year with the Landfill Communities Fund (LCF) in 2017/18 and has distributed £11.5m of grants over the last 20 years from 1997/1998.

The LCF is a grant award scheme which allows landfill operators to contribute a portion of their landfill tax to a fund which is used for community and environmental projects in the vicinity of a landfill site.

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council are our only two remaining contributors of funds as LCF activity continues to reduce as landfill tax achieves its objective of increased recycling and landfill site closures. The amount distributed to projects in 2017/18 was c£476k. There were 18 active projects at the end of March 2018.

For the remaining lifespan of contributions from our landfill operators, Ulster Wildlife will continue to maximise the benefits of distributing funding to projects which are aligned with our own strategic goals of promoting health and well-being through enjoyment of the environment and rebuilding biodiversity and ecosystems.

Our Supporters

Our work is only possible with the support and generosity of our members and supporters. Fundraising through memberships, corporate members and legacies continue to be the main sources of unrestricted income for Ulster Wildlife. While the majority of our projects are funded through grants from statutory sources and Charitable Trusts matched with unrestricted funding.

Membership

At the end of March 2018, we had 5,949 memberships and 12,784 members achieving our target of securing at least 12,700 members. Membership income including Gift-Aid contributions during 2017/18 was £375,902 against a target of £375,979.

Membership income is extremely important as it is unrestricted and can be used whenever the greatest need is for nature. Our members also give us a mandate when talking to Government and other decision-makers about wildlife protection.

Legacies and In-Memory Gifts

Gifts in Wills and in-memory donations have helped us protect wild places, provide a lifeline to species under threat and give local people opportunities to experience wildlife in their daily lives. In 2017/18, Mr George Acheson, Dr Frederick Wallace, Mrs G M Gotto and Miss Margaret Joy Davey left us a total of £16.8K through gifts in their Wills and donations in lieu of flowers.

Corporate Members

We are grateful to all the businesses that provide support for nature in Northern Ireland through our Corporate Membership Scheme..

Platinum AES UK & Ireland

Gold Bombardier

Silver Allstate Northern Ireland
Belfast International Airport
CES Quarry Products Ltd
CTS Projects Ltd
Encirc Ltd
NIE Networks

Bronze Belfast Harbour
Denman International Ltd
Henry Brothers (Magherafelt) Ltd
Hutchinson Group Holdings (NI) Ltd
Lafarge Cement

Standard City Hotel, Derry
Finlay's Foods
Firstsource Solutions UK Ltd
Henderson Group Ltd
Peninsula Print & Design Ltd
Pritchitts, A Lakeland Dairies Company

Thank you

To our community of almost 13,000 members and donors and to the many other funders that support our work for nature. Your contributions make a huge difference for nature in Northern Ireland.

Below are some of the organisations whose vital contributions helped to make a difference for wildlife in 2017/18.

AES UK and Ireland

Alpha Programme (Groundwork NI)

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Belfast City Council

Biffa Award

Big Lottery Fund (Our Environment Our Future)

Bombardier Aerospace Foundation

Comber Rotary

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (Northern Ireland Environment Agency)

Esmée Fairburn Foundation

EU Life 14

Heritage Lottery Fund

INTERREG VA

Landfill Communities Fund through Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Ministry of Defence

Plantlife

Rees Jeffreys Road Fund

West Belfast Policing & Community Safety

Partnership supported by Belfast City Council

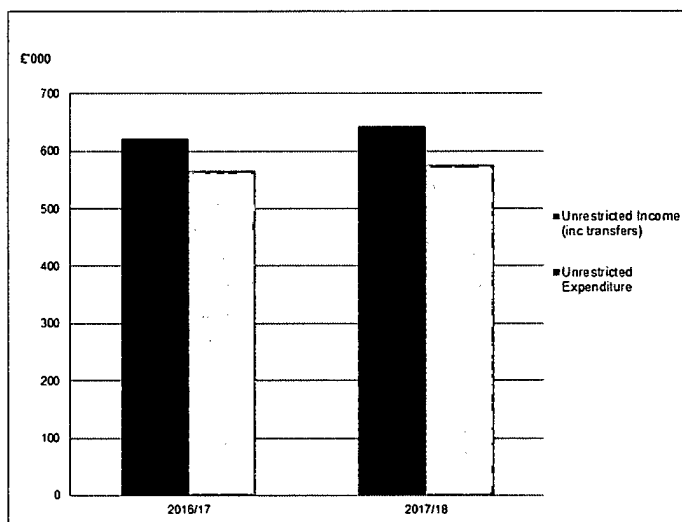
Financial Review at 31 March 2018

Ulster Wildlife's financial position remained stable during the year and a modest surplus on unrestricted activities was achieved.

Unrestricted Income and Expenditure

Unrestricted income is income generated by the charity for its general purposes. It can be used at the discretion of the charity on any of the charity's objects.

Unrestricted income was slightly higher than in the previous year (£20k). Unrestricted expenditure was slightly higher (£11k). Contribution to core costs from restricted projects increased by £25k, and after taking this contribution into account, an unrestricted surplus of £66k was generated.

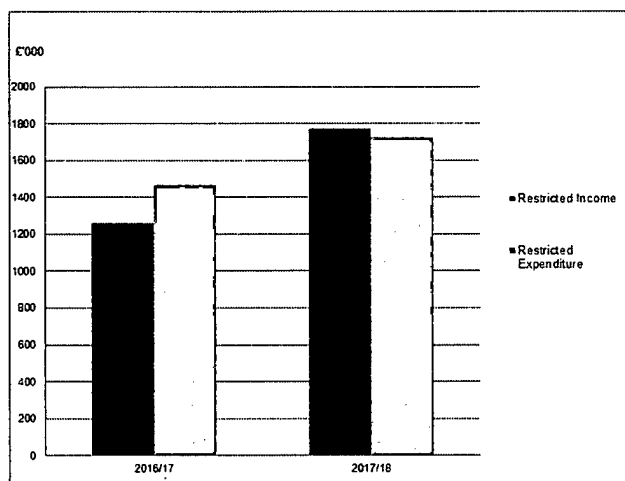


The small surplus is in keeping with the charity's objectives which are to deliver conservation outcomes rather than a surplus of income over expenditure. A modest surplus is, however, necessary in order to maintain financial stability and help to secure the long term viability of the charity.

Restricted Income and Expenditure

Restricted income is income given to the charity for very specific purposes. It may be a grant for a very specific piece of conservation work or education activity or funds to be awarded as grants to third parties, in line with specific grant guidelines.

Ulster Wildlife's restricted income has two main components, grants for specific conservation and education activity which



is delivered by the charity and Landfill Community Funds where grants are awarded by the charity to third parties for purposes defined under the Landfill Communities Fund guidelines. Restricted income in 2017/18 was c. £487k higher than 2016/17. Grants from third parties awarded to Ulster Wildlife for the direct delivery of specific conservation outcomes increased by £424k in the year. Contributions to the Landfill Communities Fund increased by £43k. This is a reflection of the charity's constant efforts in seeking new sources of grant funding in order to continue and expand its conservation work. Restricted expenditure in 2017/18 was again significantly higher than in 2016/17 (£232k). After transfers to unrestricted funds to reflect a contribution to overhead costs, the surplus on restricted funds amounted to £49k.

Restricted financial reserves cannot be utilised by the charity, except for the very specific purposes set out by the funder. These reserves are therefore not available to fund general working capital requirements or fund any unexpected events.

Plans for the Future

2018/19 will be the sixth year of our current seven-year Corporate Strategy - 'Wildlife in Trust'. Our aims for 2018/19 remain focused on our five strategic goals -

1. **To inspire people** to champion wildlife and value nature.
2. **To protect and restore habitats and ecosystems** through practical action and research.
3. **To stand up for nature** by influencing government policy.
4. **To promote health and well-being** through enjoyment of the natural environment.
5. **To grow our success** and extend our reach.

Our fundraising targets for 2018/19 are:

- > To secure at least 13,500 members or regular supporters.
- > To secure £388,940 income from Membership including Gift-Aid contributions.

In April 2018, we will begin our new Sea Deep Project, funded by Heritage Lottery Fund for the next three years, where we will work alongside sea anglers, schools and community groups to help safeguard the future of our endangered sharks, skates and rays.

Unfortunately, some of our local species are now classed as threatened, endangered or critically endangered, meaning that there are very few left in our seas. These include Tope (Threatened), Spurdog (Endangered), Common Skate (Critically Endangered) and Porbeagle (Critically Endangered). From tagging sharks at sea to hunting for their egg cases on the shore, we will be training and equipping volunteers to help identify important spawning and nursery grounds, so we can target conservation efforts in our local seas. More records on our sharks' presence and movement will enable us to call for the right management measures that will help them to recover.

In other areas of our marine conservation work, we are in the early stages of planning a pioneering seagrass restoration project and we will be working to develop a closer relationship with the local fishing community to promote sustainable practices and fish choices locally.

Our habitats and species focused work will continue through our nature reserves suite along with our Red Squirrels United Project and our barn owl conservation activities.

A major focus for Ulster Wildlife will continue to be peatland restoration with our focus on developing conservation management plans and habitat improvement works across a range of peatland Special Areas of Conservation across the country through the Interreg VA-funded CANN Project. Working on both blanket and raised bogs, such as Cuilcagh Mountain in Fermanagh, Garry Bog in Antrim, Peatlands Park in Armagh, and Moneygal, we'll also be up-skilling and training local landowners to manage these unique landscapes into the future for the vulnerable species that rely upon them, such as golden plover, red grouse and curlew.

The conservation of our remaining species-rich grasslands will also continue through our work with farmers in the Environmental Farming Scheme. Farmers have a very important role to play as custodians of the countryside and guardians of many of our wild places. Working together with them we can make a real difference for wildlife. We look forward to seeing the impact of this work over coming years and will support a new intake of applicants during the 2018/19 year.

Should we get a positive decision on our partnership application to Heritage Lottery Fund, for phase two of the Magnificent Meadows Project in September 18, we will embark upon planning activities to secure further areas of this sensitive and threatened habitat in Fermanagh and South Tyrone for the benefit of a whole host of wildlife especially our crucial pollinator species.

Inspiring the next generation of nature lovers will continue through a wide range of events, education sessions, volunteering and training. Our new Nature Skills NI project will complete its first year – building on the success of our previous HLF-funded Skills for the Future Project. Work on our ParkLife and Grassroots Challenge programmes will engage thousands of young people with nature.

We also plan to increase our offering in relation to provision of services that promote health and well-being and the natural environment and further work will be undertaken to scope possible delivery models during 2018/19.

Brexit and its implications for the natural environment remain a significant risk and we will continue to work in coalition with other local environmental NGOs through the Nature Matters NI campaign to ensure that environmental protection isn't weakened through the process of leaving the EU.

During 2018/19, we will begin the process of developing a new 5-year Strategic Plan for Ulster Wildlife as well as our longer term vision for Northern Ireland's natural environment. We will take account of global and local strategies to enhance biodiversity, we'll engage with our partners to explore further opportunities for collaboration and we'll identify the unique contribution that Ulster Wildlife can make to improving the fortunes of local wildlife while also enhancing the lives of local people. Alongside this work we'll be developing a new fundraising strategy to help us to secure the much-needed funds to achieve our ambitions.

We'll celebrate our 40th anniversary in 2018 and will run a programme of special member's events and a full member's day in September 2018 to show our appreciation for the amazing support we get from our nearly 13,000 members and to showcase the impact their support is having. All our charitable activity is only possible with the support of our members and funders and we will work hard to secure more support during the coming years.

Structure, governance and management

Ulster Wildlife Trust, (operating as Ulster Wildlife) is registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (NIC101848) and is a not-for-profit company incorporated in Northern Ireland, limited by guarantee (NI 12711). It is an independent body, locally governed, although affiliated to The Wildlife Trusts, a federated network of 47 charities across the UK.

The charity is governed by a Board of Trustees (Council) comprised of up to 16 members, nominated and elected from the membership of the organisation. Council members are elected at the AGM each year to serve up to an eight-year term.

At the AGM at least one quarter of the Council must retire, and unless they have served for eight consecutive years, are eligible for re-election.

The Ulster Wildlife Council is responsible for making strategic decisions in relation to policy and procedure within Ulster Wildlife, while day-to-day operational decisions and management is delegated to the Chief Executive, who in turn oversees the staff team of Ulster Wildlife.

All Board Members receive induction training in relation to their role and are provided with a Governance Handbook when they are elected to the Board.

Details of the serving Council Members in 2017/18 can be found below:

CHAIRMAN

Roy Ramsay

(Appointed on
05 September 2012,
resigned 22 November 2017)

R, G

VICE CHAIRMAN / CHAIRMAN

Ken Brundle

(Appointed on
17 September 2013,
appointed Chairman
22 November 2017)

F, R

HONORARY TREASURER

Ross Boyd

(Appointed on 03 March 2016,
resigned 16 May 2018)

R

COUNCIL MEMBER

**Gillian
Allen**

(Appointed on
19 November 2015)

G

COUNCIL MEMBER

**Peter
Archdale**

(Appointed on
17 September 2013,
resigned 22 November
2017)

E, G

COUNCIL MEMBER

**Stephen
Aston**

(Co-opted on
07 December 2017)

R

COUNCIL MEMBER

**Bob Brown
OBE**

(Appointed on
29 September 2010)

E

COUNCIL MEMBER

Edith Finlay

(Appointed on
28 September 2011)

G

COUNCIL MEMBER

Ben Matson

(Appointed on
05 September 2012)

G

COUNCIL MEMBER

**Jim
McAdam
OBE**

(Appointed on
22 November 2017)

E

COUNCIL MEMBER

**Lorraine
McCourt**

(Appointed on
05 October 2016)

F

COUNCIL MEMBER

**Craig
McGuicken**

(Appointed on
07 October 2014)

R

COUNCIL MEMBER

**Fiona
McVicker**

(Appointed on
19 November 2015)

R, G

COUNCIL MEMBER

Doris Noe

(Appointed on
05 September 2012)

E

COUNCIL MEMBER

**Howard
Platt**

(Appointed on
07 October 2014)

E

COUNCIL MEMBER

**John
Witchell**

(Co-opted on
07 December 2017)

E

COUNCIL MEMBER

Ed Wright

(Appointed on
07 October 2015)

F

Changes to the Council

Changes to the Ulster Wildlife Council during 2017/18:

Roy Ramsay and Peter Archdale resigned from Council on 22 November 2017.

The Board and staff would like to records our thanks for their dedication and contribution.

Jim McAdam was appointed to Council on 22 November 2017. Stephen Aston and John Witchell were co-opted to Council on 07 December 2017.

The governance sub-structure is made up of four sub-committees - Governance, Resources, Environment and Fundraising. This governance framework is designed to ensure that we are an accountable, effective and efficient charity and to manage risk at a reasonable level.

1. The Governance Committee (G)

ensures that the Ulster Wildlife Council fulfils its legal, ethical, and functional responsibilities through adequate governance policy development, skills audits, recruitment strategies for Council Members, training programs, monitoring of Council activities, and evaluation of Council's performance.

2. The Resources Committee (R)

supports Council in ensuring that the effective governance of Ulster Wildlife is maintained in relation to: Financial Resources, Human Resources, Physical Resources and Health and Safety.

3. The Environment Committee (E)

provides ongoing strategic input into the organisation's work linked to Living Landscapes and Living Seas. The remit of this Committee encompasses nature reserves, environmental projects linked to habitats and/or species and input into regional policy issues.

4. The Fundraising Committee (F)

provides ongoing strategic input to the organisation's fundraising activities - with a focus on unrestricted fundraising.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors of Ulster Wildlife Trust) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations. Company and charity law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure for that period. In preparing these financial statements the directors 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 UK 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 charitable company will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2008. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Provision of Information to Auditors

Each of the individuals who is a trustee at the date of approval of this reports confirms that:

- so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditor is unaware; and
- they have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditor

DNTCA Limited are deemed to be re-appointed under section 487(2) of the Companies Act 2006.

This report was approved by the Board on 25 July 2018 and signed on its behalf by

Ken Brundle
Chairman

Craig McGuicken
Trustee

Key Policies and processes

Managing Risk

Ulster Wildlife Trustees are responsible for identifying and managing the risks facing the charity. They are responsible for ensuring that Ulster Wildlife has a system of internal control, management and audit to take advantage of opportunities and manage risk effectively.

Risk management is well established and is considered in every aspect of our work. We have an active risk management process in place to make sure that appropriate steps are taken to manage and mitigate risk across the organisation.

The Board of Trustees and Senior Management Team are clear that risk should be very carefully assessed in relation to the health, welfare and security of staff, volunteers and the public and in managing the reputation of Ulster Wildlife. Risks are also reviewed in the broadest sense and anything that might alter or impact on the charity's ability to fulfil its charitable objectives is considered.

Processes include:

- > Risk assessments are completed by all staff to identify, evaluate and manage risks.
- > Risk register with mitigation actions is reviewed at least quarterly by the Board.
- > A comprehensive risk management review is carried out once at year by the Governance and Resources Committees and reported to the Board Meeting.
- > Multi-year planning, with targets that are linked to delivery of Corporate Strategy.
- > Regular financial reporting and control which compares results with budget.
- > 'Value for Money' principles guide when and where we source goods and services.
- > Annual external audit.

The most significant risks identified in 2017/18 were:

Uncertainties arising from Brexit - leaving the EU may lead to a weakening of environmental protection and this may impact upon our work and funding for environmental activities. Pro-active work was undertaken during the year through the Nature Matters NI Coalition to work towards policies to achieve a 'nature-friendly' Brexit.

Funding uncertainties as a result of the pressures on the NI block grant. The environment was well down the list of spending priorities in the NI Budget consultation process taken forward by the NICS in the absence of the NI Assembly. We will be lobbying during the coming year for consideration of environmental levies to fund essential conservation outcomes to enable the UK to meet its international obligations and become the 'first generation to leave the environment in a better state than they inherited' which is the stated goal of Westminster MPs.

During 2017/18, specific risk assessments were completed for potential cashflow and foreign exchange rate risks associated with the delivery of the Interreg project, Collaborative Action for Natura Network and a specialist audit completed in relation to the General Data Protection Regulations to be introduced in May 2018.

The main risks to be managed in the year ahead are:

Cash flow and foreign exchange rate implications of EU funded projects.

Continuing uncertainty around Government funding as a new cycle of Environment Fund bids commences.

Retention of skilled and experienced staff during this period of uncertainty.

Our Fundraising Approach

As a charity founded by local nature enthusiasts we hold our supporters in the highest possible regard. We not only adhere to all legal requirements, we also strive to achieve the highest standards in our fundraising by following best practice guidance for the charity sector.

Ulster Wildlife is registered with the Fundraising Regulator and follows best practice in fundraising, as laid out in the Fundraising Regulator's Code of Fundraising Practice. Ulster Wildlife fundraises primarily through offering membership of our charity to the general public and businesses. Membership promotion takes place at venues and events across Northern Ireland. Membership staff are branded and wear photographic ID at all times. In addition, we contact our existing members on an annual basis to give them the option of increasing their financial contribution to our conservation work or a one-off donation for a particular appeal.

Any external agencies who conduct this work on our behalf are required to do so in a respectful manner and in accordance with fundraising standards and regulations

Ulster Wildlife understands that our supporters have trusted us with their personal information and we will never sell our supporters' information to another organisation or individual. Our supporters have the opportunity to opt out of any existing communications by any method at any time. Opting out does not affect all membership mailings, some of which are a legal requirement (e.g. Direct Debit advance notice letters).

We have updated our Privacy Notice for Members and Supporters in light of the recently adopted General Data Protection Regulations and this is available on our website at www.ulsterwildlife.org/privacynotice

Any concerns about Ulster Wildlife's fundraising practices can be raised through our complaints procedure. Our complaints procedure is available on our website at www.ulsterwildlife.org/Complaints.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity

Ulster Wildlife aims to be an employer of choice, for people from different backgrounds and through our Equality in the Workplace policy, we promote respect for the individual and equality of opportunity.

Our aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of the wider community and for each employee to feel respected and able to give of their best. Within Ulster Wildlife there is respect for promotion and protection of each individual's human rights.

Ulster Wildlife promotes being at ease with all aspects of diversity, built on fairness and respect for all. Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit are made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

Ulster Wildlife recognises that such a policy is not only good management practice, but that it also makes good sense. Our Equality in the Workplace policy helps all those who work for us to develop their full potential and ensure that the talents and resources of the workforce are utilised to fully maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Sustainability

During 2017/18, we have continued to implement our Environmental Sustainability Strategy and our move towards 'zero' waste. Staff have diverted 200kg of green waste from landfill and returned 16kg of used printer cartridges to Xerox under its free recycling scheme.

Seven swift boxes were installed on our main office building – McClelland House – in early 2018. Swifts, a Northern Ireland Priority Species, have declined partly because of loss of nest sites.

Wider network

Ulster Wildlife is part of a collective of 47 Wildlife Trusts, represented nationally by The Royal Society for Wildlife Trusts (RSWT). The Wildlife Trusts collectively, act together where appropriate, in key policy areas and campaigns.

Financial Management

Financial Reserves Policy

Ulster Wildlife, in common with most charities, has an objective to set aside sufficient reserves to fund working capital and meet unexpected events, mainly in relation to the funding of our conservation activities. This is especially important as we increase the number and complexity of projects, including those where the grant funding is denominated in foreign currency.

To achieve this objective, the trustees seek to set aside financial reserves amounting to six months unrestricted payroll and support costs, which currently amounts to £304k.

The balance on general reserves at 31 March 2018 is £738k. After deduction of unrestricted fixed assets, unrestricted financial reserves amount to £299k which represents a major contribution to that objective.

Investment Policy

Ulster Wildlife does not have investments apart from cash balances held on short term deposit. The policy is to safeguard cash in a manner which minimises risk but seeks to achieve a satisfactory level of return.

In line with this aim, cash balances will be placed in short term cash deposits (less than one year) in UK based banks with a credit rating of P1/P2 (Moody's) or equivalent.

Ulster Wildlife will seek to spread deposits over a number of institutions.

Remuneration Policy

Pay for all staff is determined by a job evaluation system which places the role on one of eight pay scales. Inflation awards, which are currently capped at 1%, reflecting the current economic climate, are dependent on affordability within the unrestricted operational budget.

Benchmarking of payscales is undertaken periodically.

Advisors, Senior Personnel and Administrative Details

Auditors DNT Chartered Accountants
Ormeau House
91-97 Ormeau Road
Belfast
BT7 1SH

Bankers Danske Bank
Belfast Finance Centre
PO Box 183
Donegall Square West
Belfast
BT1 6JS

Solicitors Edwards & Co.
28 Hill Street
Belfast
BT1 2LA

Company Secretary Jennifer Fulton

Senior Management Team Jennifer Fulton
Chief Executive

Dawn Miskelly
Operations Director

Rosalind McSparron
Corporate Services Manager

Charity Registration Number NIC 101848

Company Registration Number NI12711

Registered Office and Operational Address McClelland House
10 Heron Road
Belfast
BT3 9LE

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Ulster Wildlife Trust

We have audited the financial statements of Ulster Wildlife Trust for the year ended 31 March 2018 which comprise the statement of financial activities (including income and expenditure account), statement of financial position, statement of cash flows and the related notes including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 The Financial Reporting standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

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

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2018 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice;
- 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 charity 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

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require us to report to you where:

- the trustees use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the trustees have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the charity's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

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.

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.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, 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 audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a misstatement of this other information, we are required to report this fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006.

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

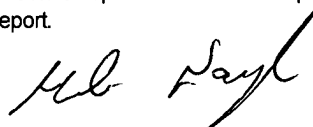
- the information given in the trustees' report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and;
- the trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

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

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the 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; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies exemptions in preparing the directors' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.



Mr M Nangle (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of DNTCA Limited
Ormeau House
91-97 Ormeau Road
Belfast
BT7 1SH

**Statement of Financial Activities
(including income and expenditure account)
for the year ended 31 March 2018**


				2018	2017
		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
	Notes	Fund	Fund	Funds	Funds
		£	£	£	£
INCOME FROM:					
Donations & Legacies	3	412,388	0	412,388	419,913
Conservation activities	4	2,846	945,684	948,530	560,167
Agri-environment payments		35,260	9,698	44,958	41,030
Charitable activities-landfill contributions	5	-	381,748	381,748	338,936
Education & training activities	6	3,081	389,176	392,257	357,381
Interest received	7	2,223	4,587	6,809	29,009
Other Income	8	41,982	42,004	83,986	41,821
TOTAL INCOME		497,780	1,772,897	2,270,677	1,788,257
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising Funds	9	102,114	-	102,114	76,917
Charitable Activities	10	474,823	1,578,131	2,052,954	1,858,316
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		576,938	1,578,131	2,155,069	1,935,233
NET INCOME BEFORE TRANSFERS		(79,158)	194,766	115,608	(146,976)
Transfers between funds	14	145,307	(145,307)	0	0
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		66,149	49,460	115,608	(146,976)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS:					
Total funds at 1 April 2017		671,791	1,835,216	2,507,007	2,653,983
TOTAL FUNDS AT 31 MARCH 2018		737,940	1,884,676	2,622,615	2,507,007

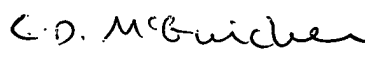
The notes on pages 35 to 42 form part of these financial statements.
The Statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses in the year.
All income and expenditure derives from continuing activities.

Statement of Financial Position
31 March 2018

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2018 Total Funds £	2017 Total Funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	16	439,339	468,050	907,389	901,107
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	17	45,489	100,539	146,028	227,440
Cash at bank and in hand		371,011	1,742,560	2,113,571	1,941,203
		416,500	1,843,099	2,259,599	2,168,643
CURRENT LIABILITIES					
Creditors	18	105,247	108,734	213,981	223,582
NET CURRENT ASSETS					
		311,253	1,734,366	2,045,616	1,945,060
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES					
		750,592	2,202,416	2,953,005	2,846,167
CREDITORS due in more than 1 year					
Capital Grants	19	12,132	317,739	329,871	338,641
		738,460	1,884,676	2,623,134	2,507,526
RESERVES					
Unrestricted Fund	20	737,940	0	737,940	671,791
Life Membership Fund		520	0	520	520
Restricted Funds	21	0	1,884,676	1,884,676	1,835,216
		738,460	1,884,676	2,623,134	2,507,526

These financial statements were approved and signed by the members of the Board and authorised for issue on 25 July 2018.


Ken Brundle, Chairman


Craig McGuicken, Trustee

The notes on pages 35 to 42 form part of these financial statements. Company Registration Number: NI 12711

Statement of Cash Flows

Year ending 31 March 2018

	2018	2017
	£	£
Cash Flows from operating activities		
Net income/(expenditure)	115,608	(146,976)
<i>Adjustments for</i>		
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	27,373	24,466
Release of deferred capital grant	(8,769)	(7,763)
Accrued expenses	24,961	21,687
Changes in:		
Trade and Other Debtors	81,412	(101,030)
Trade and other Creditors	(34,562)	(3,306)
Net cash generated by / (used in)	206,023	(212,922)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of tangible assets	(33,655)	(13,416)
Capital grant received		6,877
Net cash used in investing activities	(33,655)	(6,539)
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	172,368	(219,461)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the year	1,941,203	2,160,664
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the year	2,113,571	1,941,203

Notes to the Accounts

1 Statement of compliance

These financial statements have been prepared in compliance with FRS102, 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland', 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 (Charities SORP (FRS102)) and the Charities Act 2008.

2 Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis, as modified by the revaluation of certain financial assets and liabilities measured at fair value through income or expenditure.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the entity.

Going concern

There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue.

Transition to FRS 102

The entity transitioned from previous UK GAAP to FRS 102 as at 1 April 2015. Details of how FRS 102 has affected the reported financial position and financial performance is given in note 22.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use, at the discretion of the trustees, to further any of the charity's purposes.

Restricted funds are subjected to restrictions on their expenditure declared by the donor or through the terms of an appeal.

Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when entitlement has passed to the charity; it is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the charity and the amount can be reliably measured. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

- income from donations or grants is recognised when there is evidence of entitlement to the gift, receipt is probable and its amount can be measured reliably.
- legacy income is recognised when receipt is probable and entitlement is established.
- income from contracts for the supply of services is recognised with the delivery of the contracted service. This is classified as unrestricted fund unless there is a contractual requirement for it to be spent on a particular purpose and returned if unspent, in which case it is regarded as restricted.

- Government and other grants are recognised at the fair value of the asset received or receivable. Grants are not recognised until there is reasonable assurance that the charity will comply with the conditions attaching to them and the grants will be received

Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure is classified under headings of the statement of financial activities to which it relates:

- expenditure on raising funds includes the costs of all fundraising activities.
- expenditure on charitable activities includes all costs incurred by the charity in undertaking activities that further its charitable aims for the benefit of its beneficiaries, including those support costs and costs relating to the governance of the charity.

All costs are allocated to expenditure categories reflecting the use of the resource. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs are apportioned between the activities they contribute to on a reasonable, justifiable and consistent basis.

Depreciation

Purchased assets, which individually exceed £1000 at cost are included in the balance sheet at historic cost less depreciation and any impairment in accordance with FRS 102.

Fixed Assets are depreciated over the period of their useful lives as follows:

Land	not depreciated
Buildings	2.5% straight-line
Equipment	10% straight line
Computers	25% straight line
Vehicles - cars and vans	15% straight line

Foreign currency

Transactions in foreign currencies are translated at rates prevailing at the date of the transaction.

Pensions

Ulster Wildlife operates a defined contribution pension scheme and matches employee contributions to the scheme at a maximum rate of 7% of salary.

Notes to the Accounts

3 Donations & legacies

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Unrestricted	Restricted
	Funds	Funds	Funds	Funds
	2018	2018	2017	2017
	£	£	£	£
Legacy & in memory giving	16,805	-	31,328	-
Membership contributions inc. gift aid	375,902	-	366,125	-
Corporate support	15,850	-	14,925	-
Other gifts & donations	3,831	-	7,092	443
	412,388	-	419,470	443

4 Conservation Grants

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Unrestricted	Restricted
	Funds	Funds	Funds	Funds
	2018	2018	2017	2017
	£	£	£	£
Government grants	-	210,588	-	231,321
Capital grant credit	2,846	5,923	1,840	5,923
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	-	126,886	-	116,767
Ministry of Defence	-	16,381	-	17,374
EU-Interreg VA	-	295,354	-	-
Tubney Charitable Trust	-	1,553	-	3,277
Heritage Lottery Fund	-	183,773	-	105,843
Biffa Award	-	17,746	-	22,924
Alpha Programme (Groundwork)	-	31,052	-	-
AES UK & Ireland	-	26,988	-	51,550
Landfill Communities Fund	-	7,548	-	-
Nineveh Charitable Trust	-	-	-	3,348
Other	-	21,892	-	-
	2,846	945,684	1,840	558,327

Notes to the Accounts

5 Landfill environmental projects

	Unrestricted Funds 2018 £	Restricted Funds 2018 £	Unrestricted Funds 2017 £	Restricted Funds 2017 £
Landfill contributions received		381,748		338,936
		381,748		338,936
<u>Expenditure</u>				
Entrust administration fee	-	8,596	-	9,354
Direct project expenditure	-	476,268	-	524,105
Direct Costs	31,730	-	26,110	3,500
	31,730	484,863	26,110	536,959

6 Education & Training Grants and Income

	Unrestricted Funds 2018 £	Restricted Funds 2018 £	Unrestricted Funds 2017 £	Restricted Funds 2017 £
Big Lottery Fund (Our Environment Our Future)	-	180,095	-	151,832
Heritage Lottery Fund	-	126,595	-	112,319
Belfast City Council	-	79,143	-	83,256
Bombardier Foundation	-	-	-	1,333
Other	3,081	3,342	5,256	3,384
	3,081	389,176	5,256	352,124

7 Interest received

Interest received in Restricted Funds is the interest earned on landfill tax receipts held prior to disbursement, and interest received which is used to fund expenditure on nature reserves. Interest received in unrestricted funds is bank interest earned on other cash balances.

Notes to the Accounts

8 Other Income

	Unrestricted Funds 2018 £	Restricted Funds 2018 £	Unrestricted Funds 2017 £	Restricted Funds 2017 £
Consultancy	15,701	26,772	17,790	-
Sundry income	26,281	15,232	17,431	6,600
	<u>41,982</u>	<u>42,004</u>	<u>35,221</u>	<u>6,600</u>

9 Expenditure on raising donations & legacies

	Unrestricted Funds 2018 £	Unrestricted Funds 2017 £
Travel	8,384	5,708
Venue Costs	4,808	3,633
Professional fees	2,802	4,131
Printed materials, misc	2,930	2,958
Wages & salary costs	83,190	60,487
	<u>102,114</u>	<u>76,917</u>

10 Charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds 2018 £	Restricted Funds 2018 £	Total Funds 2018 £	Total Funds 2017 £
Landfill Environmental Projects	31,730	484,863	516,593	563,069
Nature Conservation	132,784	750,455	883,240	702,477
Environmental Education & Training	-	335,611	335,611	283,032
Membership Support Costs	89,613	-	89,613	91,592
Organisation Support Costs	192,894	-	192,894	186,369
Depreciation	20,172	7,201	27,373	24,465
Bank Interest & Charges	3,698	-	3,698	3,452
Auditor's Remuneration	3,932	-	3,932	3,860
	<u>474,823</u>	<u>1,578,131</u>	<u>2,052,954</u>	<u>1,858,316</u>

Notes to the Accounts

11 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Staff Costs	Other direct costs	2018	2017
	£	£	£	£
Landfill environmental projects	24,098	492,495	516,593	563,069
Nature Conservation	545,327	337,913	883,240	702,477
Environmental Education	190,380	145,231	335,611	283,032
Membership Support Costs	40,125	49,488	89,613	91,592
Organisation Support Costs	121,997	70,898	192,894	186,369
Other - depreciation, bank charges, audit.	-	35,003	35,003	31,777
	921,927	1,131,027	2,052,954	1,858,316

Other Direct Costs

	Landfill Envir. Projects	Nature Conservation	Environmental Education	Membership & Organisation Support Costs	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Direct project costs	484,863	82,542	104,637	28,051	700,093
Premises costs	6,909	13,418	1,682	25,253	47,262
Postage, printing & stationery	-	9,170	8,310	35,989	53,469
Staff travel and vehicle costs	722	59,405	7,780	5,470	73,377
Contracted services	-	165,953	17,275	5,126	188,353
Staff training	-	1,881	1,602	1,112	4,595
Council Costs	-	0	0	5,489	5,489
Information Technology	-	5,544	3,945	13,896	23,385
	492,495	337,913	145,231	120,386	1,096,025

12 Depreciation

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds
	2018	2018	2017	2017
	£	£	£	£
Motor vehicles	3,913	3,425	1,006	3,425
Equipment	9,221	1,782	9,221	1,782
Buildings	8,315	717	8,315	717
	21,449	5,924	18,542	5,924

Notes to the Accounts

13 Staff Costs

	2018	2017
	£	£
Salaries and wages	879,672	727,809
Social Security Costs	72,271	57,351
Pension Contributions	53,174	32,059
	<u>1,005,117</u>	<u>817,219</u>

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000. The average number of employees during the year, calculated on the basis of full time equivalents, was 35. (2017- 29).
The key management personnel comprise the trustees and the members of the senior management team. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel was £143,052. (2017: £138,760).

14 Transfer between Funds

	2018	2017
	£	£
Landfill contribution to organisation support costs	31,730	26,110
Project contribution to organisation support costs	110,601	91,570
Conservation work at Glendun	2,976	2,808
	<u>145,307</u>	<u>120,488</u>

15 Council remuneration and related party transactions

No members of council received any remuneration during the year. Travel and subsistence costs amounting to £321 (2017-£991) were reimbursed to 1 (2017-1) member of council.

16 Fixed Assets

	Nature Reserves	Land & Buildings	Motor Vehicles	Equipment & Computers	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£
COST OR VALUATION					
At 1 April 2017	349,372	599,287	60,573	94,968	1,104,200
Additions	0	0	33,655	-	33,655
Disposals	0		9,521	4,500	14,021
At 31 March 2018	<u>349,372</u>	<u>599,287</u>	<u>84,707</u>	<u>90,468</u>	<u>1,123,834</u>
DEPRECIATION					
At 1 April 2017	-	130,541	39,031	33,521	203,093
Charge for year	-	9,032	7,338	11,003	27,373
Disposals	-		9,521	4,500	14,021
At 31 March 2018	<u>-</u>	<u>139,573</u>	<u>36,848</u>	<u>40,024</u>	<u>216,445</u>
NBV at 31 March 2018	349,372	459,714	47,859	50,444	907,389
<i>including restricted assets of</i>	<i>309,372</i>	<i>150,000</i>	<i>5,708</i>	<i>2,970</i>	<i>468,050</i>
Glendun farm has been included at probate value of £150,000.					

Notes to the Accounts

17 Debtors

	Unrestricted Funds 2018 £	Restricted Funds 2018 £	Unrestricted Funds 2017 £	Restricted Funds 2017 £
Debtors and prepayments	23,718	17,006	27,224	14,273
Grants	4,685	83,534	38,111	131,196
Tax refunds due	17,086	-	16,636	0
	<u>45,489</u>	<u>100,539</u>	<u>81,971</u>	<u>145,469</u>

18 Creditors falling due within one year

	Unrestricted Funds 2018 £	Restricted Funds 2018 £	Unrestricted Funds 2017 £	Restricted Funds 2017 £
Sundry creditors and accrued expenditure	105,247	108,734	153,751	69,831

19 Creditors falling due after more than 1 year

	Unrestricted Funds 2018 £	Restricted Funds 2018 £	Unrestricted Funds 2017 £	Restricted Funds 2017 £
Capital grants	12,132	317,739	14,978	323,663

20 Movement on unrestricted funds

	Unrestricted Funds 2018 £	Unrestricted Funds 2017 £
Balance at 1 April 2017	671,791	614,452
Surplus for the year	66,149	57,339
Balance at 31 March 2018	<u>737,940</u>	<u>671,791</u>

Notes to the Accounts

21 Movement on restricted funds

	Restricted Funds 2018 £	Restricted Funds 2017 £
Opening balance	1,835,216	2,039,531
Net income/(expenditure) for the year	49,460	(204,315)
Closing balance	<u>1,884,676</u>	<u>1,835,216</u>

Some funders pay in advance and other funders issue payment only after the expenditure has been incurred. The movement on restricted funds in any year is a result of timing differences between receipts of grants for restricted projects and the related expenditure.

22 Taxation

As a charity, Ulster Wildlife Trust is exempt from tax on income and gains to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects. No tax charges have arisen in the Trust.

23 Company Status

Ulster Wildlife Trust Limited is a private company limited by guarantee and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the members is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the company in the event of liquidation.