



**BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

**ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS**

**For the Year Ended**

**31 March 2023**

**Registered Charity  
England and Wales No. 1152954  
Scotland No. SC038675**

**Company Registration No. 08553976**

**BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

**ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS**

**For the year ended 31 March 2023**

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# BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

## ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2023

The Board of Trustees presents its Annual Report together with the Accounts of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI, the Society, the Charity) for the year ended 31 March 2023. Since Charity Trustees are also Directors, this Annual Report is also a Directors' Report as required by S417 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out on pages 38-40 and comply with the Society's Articles, the Companies Act 2006, the Charity SORP (Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102)) and applicable law and accounting practice.

### 1. Objectives and Strategy

#### Objectives

The objects of the Society (as stated in its Articles of Association) are:

- to promote the study and understanding of, and interest in, the British and Irish vascular plant and charophyte flora; and
- to support, encourage, carry out and participate in research into the taxonomy, ecology, biogeography and conservation of the British and Irish flora and to co-operate with European and other botanists in matters of mutual interest and concern.

#### Strategy

During the period under review, various measures were taken to facilitate the meeting of these objectives, and to deliver *BSBI's Strategic Plan 2021-2024*:

Vision: A world where wild plants thrive and are valued.

Purpose: To advance the understanding and appreciation of wild plants and support their conservation in Britain and Ireland.

Goals:

1. Build a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop the skill base.
2. Provide high quality, impartial data and interpretation for research and to help address biodiversity loss and climate change.
3. Disseminate information to drive a passion for plants.

Foundations:

1. Strong relationships and brand
2. Strong governance
3. Effective data management systems
4. Sustainable business model
5. Passionate skilled staff & volunteers

Values: A love of plants, Intrepid, Inclusive, Inquisitive

The Strategic Plan is helping BSBI move forward in a sustainable and resilient way, building on almost two centuries of achievements while being ready to grow and adapt to the challenges of a rapidly changing world and address issues such as concerns around climate change and biodiversity loss.

The next section of this report, Activities, Achievements & Performance, sets out the steps taken under the leadership of the Society's Chief Executive, Julia Hanmer, to deliver the Strategy's Goals.

## 2. Activities, Achievements and Performance

### Goals

#### *Goal 1: Build a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop the skill base*

The Society, which traces its origins to 1836, is now 187 years old and its principal achievement is, arguably, in continuing to do what it has always done to great effect: acting as an information exchange for British and Irish botanists, whether in the field or indoors, and from one generation to the next. After the disruption of the pandemic, the Society was able to resume its usual practice of running an annual programme of field meetings and indoor events aimed at botanists of all skill levels across Britain and Ireland. This programme introduces newcomers to the Society, fosters the mentoring of individuals' field identification skills, encourages existing members to work together and helps to build a diverse community of botanists to sustain and deliver the skill base. Wherever possible, talks given at online and hybrid events were recorded and uploaded to the BSBI YouTube channel; by the end of March 2023, the channel had attracted almost 3,000 subscribers and many of the webinars had been viewed thousands of times.

In total, 39 events were held during the period under review; these included field meetings aimed at beginner botanists; recording events for intrepid botanists – examples from Scotland included a boat journey to gain records from Loch Maree Islands National Nature Reserve and a camping weekend to record plants on Mullach Coire Mhic Fhearchair and Sgurr Dubh; workshops and specialist training meetings targeted at both improver and expert botanists; and conferences aimed at bringing together botanists of national and international standing to mix with the general membership and to pursue themes relevant to the day, and to publicise the results of recent research.

The Annual Summer Meeting was held for the first time since 2019; based at the Field Studies Council's Malham Tarn accommodation over a long weekend in July 2022, it attracted 42 participants. The British and Irish Botanical Conference (formerly known as the BSBI Annual Exhibition Meeting) was held at the Natural History Museum, London in November 2022; it attracted 245 bookings and featured nine talks, two guided tours of the world-famous Sloane Herbarium, 24 exhibits and seven flash talks. All the talks were recorded and uploaded to the BSBI YouTube channel, where they had attracted 2,648 views by the end of March 2023. The Annual General Meeting was held virtually as a separate event, to allow participation from members who did not wish to, or were unable to, travel to London.

The Scottish Botanists' Conference, held at Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh on 5th November 2022, attracted 150 visitors who enjoyed nine talks, six mini-workshops, 28 exhibits and two herbarium tours. Talks were recorded and had attracted 1,845 views by 31st March 2023. The Irish Spring Conference was held online, with 134 attendees; the seven talks were recorded and had been viewed more than 2000 times by 31st March 2023. The Irish Autumn Conference, held at National Botanic Garden, Glasnevin in September 2022 was attended by 50 people and the six talks have since been viewed 1,325 times. The Wales Annual Meeting, based at the University of Bangor, was held over a long weekend in June 2022; 50 participants enjoyed two talks and excursions to six local sites of botanical interest.

Activities to help build a diverse community of botanists continued into the winter months. The Society's annual New Year Plant Hunt, now in its twelfth year, provided plant-lovers at all skill levels with an opportunity to try out botanical recording by looking for wild and naturalised plants in bloom at midwinter; a dedicated support team provided encouragement and help with identification. A series of three online winter talks attracted a total 278 attendees and the videos were viewed 1,189 times by the end of March 2023.

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Goals (continued)

With the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, and thanks to funding from the Irish National Parks & Wildlife Services (NPWS), the BSBI Aquatic Plant Project was able to offer a series of field-based workshops across Ireland and online training which reached hundreds of people (see the Table below). We are delighted that the NPWS has agreed to fund BSBI for a follow-on three-year Targeted Aquatic Plant Project.

Plant group(s)	Training Events 2022/23					
	Target area	Funded/charged	No.	In-person or online?	Participants on the day	YouTube views
<b>Ferns</b>	Britain & Ireland	£5	1	O	Online link only	638
<b>Sedges &amp; Rushes</b>	Dumfries, Scotland	£15 including Identification booklet	1	IP	17	n/a
<b>Grasses</b>	Hamilton, Scotland	£15 including Identification booklet	1	IP	20	n/a
<b>Aquatic plants: field training events</b>	Ireland	Free/ funded by NPWS	8	IP	63	n/a
<b>Aquatic plants: webinars</b>	Ireland	Free/ funded by NPWS	7	O	137	2,485
<b>Composite flowers</b>	Fife, Scotland	£15 including Identification booklet	1	IP	10	n/a
<b>Seagrasses</b>	Co. Wexford, Ireland	Free	1	IP	13	n/a
<b>Seagrasses</b>	Britain & Ireland	Free	1	O	134	381
<b>Irish scaly male-ferns</b>	Britain & Ireland	Free	1	O	50	309
<b>Non-native alders</b>	Britain & Ireland	Free	1	O	134	286

By resuming in-person activities while also continuing to harness technology, BSBI was able to grow its programme of training events and expand its ability to deliver opportunities for learning and local engagement, as well as implementing policies and initiatives aimed at counteracting the loss of opportunities for the study of whole-plant biology at schools and universities. The Society's grants programme, offering a range of grants from Training Grants aimed at beginners and improvers, through Plant Study Grants and Science & Research Grants aimed at undergraduate and post-graduate researchers, also helped to develop the skill base and support research into the British and Irish flora.

Each recipient of a BSBI grant is invited to write a short report for publication on the BSBI website, to attend a national event such as the British & Irish Botanical Conference (formerly the BSBI Annual Exhibition Meeting) and to offer a poster and/or a flash talk, about the course they were able to attend, or the research they were able to carry out, thanks to a BSBI grant. In November 2022, five grant recipients accepted this invitation and members attending the Conference were able to hear more about the work their subscriptions helped to support. Where appropriate, grant recipients are also encouraged

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### Goals (continued)

to publish the results of their research in a BSBI periodical. During the period under review, work also continued under the auspices of BSBI's Skills & Training Committee to promote urban botany and to develop a programme of activities under the 'Botany for All' banner which aims to feed into the strategic goal of building a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop the skill base.

	Grants			
	2023 applications	2023 Awards	2022 applications	2022 Awards
<b>Training Grant</b>	29	23	29	19
<b>Plant Study Grant</b>	7	3	7	7
<b>Science &amp; Research Grant</b>	5	3	12	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>29</b>

Following several years of discussions and consultation, thanks to the generosity of the BSBI members who founded these schemes, both Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC) tests, the industry standard for assessing field identification and botanical survey skills, and Identiplant, the online plant ID course, were brought in-house during the period under review and are now coordinated by BSBI. The development of sustainable business models made it possible to appoint a dedicated Training Coordinator, Dr Chantal Helm, who took up the post in January 2023. Dr Helm has been liaising with existing FISC providers and recruiting new FISC providers to deliver FISCs across Britain. New FISC assessors have also been trained with a view to growing FISC provision over the next five years; Dr Helm has also been working with the Identiplant Management Team to develop regional delivery hubs and increase the number of tutors and students going forward. In 2023, 199 Identiplant students were recruited, the highest number ever (the previous record was in 2018 with 186 students). Revenue derived from FISC and Identiplant training will begin as students' learning is assessed by tutors during Summer 2023. The resultant income & expenditure will be reported in 2023/24.

The process to register Identiplant as a BSBI trademark, thereby protecting the name and logo, seen below, was completed during the period under review and the listing can be found on the Trademark database <https://www.gov.uk/search-for-trademark>



Work is ongoing to design a logo for FISC and complete the registration process.

These initiatives, alongside the ongoing success of the Society's online fern identification course and the selection of training events outlined above, helped build the in-house training offering as a complement to the external training courses which have long been listed on the BSBI website.

Goals (continued)

During the period under review, the Society's publications and periodicals portfolio continued to disseminate information to drive a passion for plants, and to sustain and develop the skill base. New and revised titles in BSBI's Handbook series are published regularly, dependent as ever on the generously given voluntary services of key authors, to bring authoritative titles to members, and to the public at large, at low cost. During 2022/23, a Handbook on *Alchemilla* / Lady's-mantles was published, accompanied by publicity on social media, by a dedicated page on the BSBI website, and by an interview with the author on the News & Views blog, thereby drawing more traffic to the BSBI website and helping to drive sales, while also raising the Society's profile as a publisher of essential botanical publications. BSBI members benefited from a substantial pre-publication discount offer on this title and also benefited from a 50% discount on the print version of BSBI's important Plant Atlas 2020, launched in March 2023; read much more on this in the next, Goal 2, section. The BSBI Handbook on Dandelions, published in 2021, was awarded the 2022 Presidents' Award by the Presidents of the Wild Flower Society and the BSBI. Work continued during the period under review to bring new handbooks into the pipeline, aided by the appointment in April 2022 of a Handbooks editor.

***Goal 2: Provide high quality, impartial data and interpretation for research and to help address biodiversity loss and climate change***

The Society and its members have always engaged themselves in the accurate recording of plant distributional data and this long tradition continues – as one member once put it, "...finality in field botany is fortunately unattainable". This year, however, a huge milestone was achieved with the publication of Plant Atlas 2020, the most in-depth survey of British and Irish flora ever undertaken. It builds on two previous plant distribution atlases published by the Society in the twentieth century and will serve as an essential resource for the study and conservation of our wild plants and their vitally important habitats for decades to come.

Plant Atlas 2020 was developed in partnership with the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology and the Biological Records Centre and is available in print and as a freely accessible website [plantatlas2020.org](http://plantatlas2020.org). In addition, *Britain's Changing Flora* and *Ireland's Changing Flora* were published summarising key findings from the project and assessing changes over time and analysing drivers of change, such as habitat loss and climate change.

Two decades of recording work by almost 9,000 volunteer recorders, collecting more than 30 million records, followed by two years of verification, map preparation, analysis and interpretation by County Recorders, expert referees and the Society's scientific staff, fed into the Plant Atlas 2020 project. By the end of March 2023, 1,576 copies of the 2-volume print atlas, published by Princeton University Press, had been sold and the website [printatlas2020.org](http://printatlas2020.org), hosted by BRC/UKCEH, had attracted more than 83,000 pageviews by more than 32,000 users.

Plant Atlas 2020 was launched at a series of online and in-person events during March 2023. More than 400 people booked for the online launch event which featured talks from BSBI Head of Science and Plant Atlas co-author Dr Kevin Walker and from Chief Executive Julia Hanmer. A series of seven country-level launches followed, attracting high-profile speakers and guests: MSP Lorna Slater, Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity spoke at the Scotland launch, held at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh; Minister Malcolm Noonan TD opened the Ireland launch at National Botanic Garden Glasnevin, Dublin; and Daniel Zeichner MP attended the Cambridge launch. Many of the talks from these launch events were recorded and uploaded to the BSBI YouTube channel, where they had attracted more than 16,000 views in total by the end of March 2023.

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### Goals (continued)

The Plant Atlas 2020 launch was supported by a media campaign, with a dedicated webpage, posts across all the Society's social media platforms and press packs circulated to almost 600 media contacts across Britain and Ireland. This resulted in extensive print and broadcast coverage: staff and officers were interviewed on BBC Radio 4's Today programme and Farming Today, on BBC TV News, Channel 4 News, and on various RTE radio programmes in Ireland, as well as on multiple local radio stations; there were features in newspapers including *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Independent*, *the Financial Times*, *the Irish Times* and the *Irish Examiner*; and reports and blogposts appeared on numerous websites including Sky News, the BBC, the Wildlife Trusts, Plantlife and the Natural History Museum.

The Society's botanical surveys and recording activities continued to deliver specific scientific and conservation objectives, including the monitoring over time of changes in the geographic ranges of British and Irish wild plants and more detailed recording of the locations and population sizes of the scarcer species including aquatic and montane species. More than 1 million new botanical occurrence records were added to the BSBI Plant Distribution Database (DDb); as of 31st March 2023, it held more than 52 million plant records, making it one of the world's largest databases of biological records. During the period under review, five new County Recorders were appointed, swelling the network to 201 and working alongside 98 expert taxonomic referees to provide the essential volunteer support which underpins all the Society's activities and achievements.

In the previous year, Trustees held consultations about BSBI's proposal to give members' greater access to plant records held in the DDb and Trustees took the decision to grant enhanced access, to allow members to better contribute to the Society's efforts to understand and conserve our wild flora. In response to the consultation feedback, the original proposals were adapted so that each County Recorder could choose the level of members' access to the DDb in their county, to take account of the regional pressures they face. This year work started to implement this enhanced access for members by creating a login for members to verify their membership. This took longer than anticipated so the next stages will be carried out in 2023/24. These are, developing a mirror version of the DDb to reduce performance impacts and creating guidance for those new to the database to help them navigate and find the plant data that interests them. Updates on progress will be posted as notices on the members' area of the website.

Work continued to develop a smartphone app for recording plants in the field, and country-level projects encouraged and supported the recording of rare plants in Scotland, in England and in Ireland, while a Working Group considered how best to maximise the value of plant records collected via iRecord. The Society also continued to be an active partner in the National Plant Monitoring Scheme, encouraging members to adopt a square for monitoring and County Recorders to take on mentorship roles.

BSBI's recording activities also support the development and implementation of conservation and land management policy and practice to address biodiversity loss and tackle climate change. The Society has continued to build on its longstanding reputation for providing a recognised evidence base which is increasingly relied on by scientific researchers and conservation practitioners. One example of this is BSBI's work, in partnership with Natural England, to develop botanical value maps and 'heatmaps', based on the plant records held in the DDb, aimed at identifying areas of high botanical value and ensuring that tree-planting is not carried out on such sites. The England Botanical Value map, which maps records of all positive habitat indicator species at the 1 x 1 km scale, was published under Open Government Licence on Natural England's Magic site in June 2022. Further more detailed heatmap layers showing the coincidence of rare, scarce and threatened species at 100 x 100 m scale and more detailed indicator maps at 1 x 1 km for 10 broad habitats were made available to decision-makers at Natural England and partners during the Summer of 2022 and work is ongoing to build on their success.

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### Goals (continued)

BSBI's online, Open Access scientific journal, *British & Irish Botany*, continued to disseminate botanical research by academics and amateurs relevant to the study of the British and Irish flora at no cost to authors or readers. By being available to all – not just BSBI members – it is also helping the Society build capacity and fulfil its obligations to the broader scientific community. 24 scientific papers were published in the fourth volume of *British & Irish Botany* and a further eight papers in the first issue of the fifth volume which was published in February 2023.

Work on a BSBI Science Strategy has now commenced with discussions to identify the high-level themes that will form the basis of the Strategy. Consultations with members and key partners over these themes will be held in the year ahead, prior to the publication of the Strategy.

### **Goal 3: Disseminate information to drive a passion for plants**

The Society's membership newsletter, *BSBI News*, continued to engage, inform and educate botanists at all skill levels; one full free article and a five-page sampler from each issue of *BSBI News* were made available to non-members via the website and promoted across social media platforms; these served as eye-catching advertisements for the benefits of membership and proved an effective recruiting tool. The periodicals portfolio also includes two monthly e-Newsletters, one aimed at active botanical recorders and one aimed at keeping both members and supporters updated about BSBI projects, activities, fundraising, news and events; country newsletters for England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, all of which were made freely available online; and a popular *News & Views* blog, all of which have helped the Society engage with the wider botanical community.

BSBI seeks to attract members of all ages and backgrounds by setting membership subscriptions at a level affordable to all, with further concessions for all students, regardless of age, in possession of a student card; for anyone under 25; and for longstanding members over 65. In light of the impact of cost-of-living pressures impacting BSBI members in 2022/23, a BSBI Hardship Fund was launched in May 2022, to support existing members wishing to continue their association with the Society in the event of unforeseen financial difficulty. BSBI Finance Manager Julie Etherington ran a half marathon in June 2022 which raised more than £1,250 towards the Hardship Fund; this is enough to give free membership to more than 30 members facing unforeseen financial difficulties. While calls on this Fund have been modest so far, BSBI looks forward to being able to help others in years to come.

As inflationary pressures continued to impact the Society's costs – for example, the cost of producing *BSBI News*, the Society's membership newsletter, has risen by 25% since 2020 – Trustees proposed increasing subscription rates for 2023 for the first time since 2020. The proposed increase was set at a level lower than inflation and was comparable with other scientific societies and nature conservation charities, and the thinking behind the proposal was communicated to members via the membership newsletter and the BSBI website. At the Annual General Meeting, held online in November 2022, members voted overwhelmingly in favour of Trustees' proposal and the new rates were implemented on 1 January 2023.

A paperless subscription option, with periodicals made available in browser via a screen reader as well as in the more traditional pdf format, had been launched in February 2022 in response to demand from members, both current and potential, and with an eye to environmental considerations. By the end of the period under review, we were delighted that more than 25% of members had opted into this paperless format.

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### Goals (continued)

In order to operate sustainably, and to encourage participation and support for our core goals from beyond the Society, BSBI supplements its subscription income with grants and donations from a range of other sources. An *Income Diversification Strategy 2020-2023*, developed during the drafting of the Strategic Plan, was implemented and the Fundraising Manager led on taking this forward during the period under review, leading to a broader range of funding streams, thereby further improving the Society's financial resilience. The Society is grateful to all the individuals, organisations and grant-making bodies that have contributed towards our work in this period. We also have many active volunteers and consider ourselves very fortunate to be able to draw upon this culture of voluntary service to achieve our charitable objectives at low cost.

Guided nationally by its volunteer expert referees and also by its staff, BSBI supports the botanical survey work carried out by its members as volunteers coordinated locally by its network of volunteer County Recorders. The Society's outreach and training programmes operate in order to complement and engage a growing membership base to contribute to its research projects, to encourage the wider botanical community to participate in citizen science projects supported by the Society, and to provide both of these groups with the necessary skills to do so.

### Membership

BSBI is delighted to report both the greatest annual increase in membership, and also that for the third consecutive year, total membership has not only continued on an upward trend but has seen a surge. As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, membership was +12%, even higher than the previous years' increase of 8.9% and exceeding the previous record of +9.2% reported at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. These totals over three consecutive years have outstripped all expectations and have exceeded the target set in BSBI's Strategic Plan to grow membership by +10% over a three-year period. The increase to March 2023 is most likely linked to the launch of the Plant Atlas – partly due to increased awareness of the Society's work and partly due to the substantial discount available to any member wishing to purchase the two-volume book– but the growth over the three years is also due in large part to the expansion and promotion of the various membership services outlined above.

	Membership as at 31 March		
	2023	2022	% Increase
UK, Isle of Man & Channel Islands	3,351	3,113	+8%
Ireland	323	236	+37%
Rest of World	136	61	+123%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,810</b>	<b>3,410</b>	<b>+12%</b>

The positive financial impact of this growth is described in the Financial Review section 4 below.

During the period under review, efforts were undertaken to broaden the range of services and resources available to BSBI members and also to acknowledge their outstanding contributions. In September 2022, BSBI Trustees launched two new awards and invited BSBI members to nominate a fellow member who had made an outstanding contribution in their local area, or a sustained and nationally significant contribution. The awards were announced in *BSBI News* and the first recipients were Fred Rumsey, nominated in the 'Outstanding Contribution to British and Irish Botany' category for his long-standing contributions to research, publications and fieldwork; and Martyn Stead, Bryan Yorke and Michael Philip in the 'Outstanding Contribution to Botany in Your Area' category.

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### Membership (continued)

Martyn has contributed a huge number of plant records and Bryan was nominated for both practical plant conservation and for harnessing social media to promote botany, while Michael's pioneering 'loose network' approach has been instrumental in tripling the average number of plant records submitted annually in three Scottish vice-counties.

The members-only area of the BSBI website, refurbished in 2021/22, was further expanded to include notices for members; information and links for BSBI members to claim a 50% discount when purchasing the Plant Atlas in print and discounts on other botanical titles; booking links for Plant Atlas launches; updates about BSBI Handbooks; and details of the BSBI archive, stored in Harrogate, which holds physical copies of important BSBI publications. Thanks to the efforts of Prof Clive Stace and the generous donations of members, the archive was expanded and by 31 March 2023 it contained almost every publication ever produced by the Society and its forerunners, providing an important resource for researchers and archivists. Pdf versions of *BSBI News* and the *BSBI Yearbook* had long been available via the members-only area of the website but a new and popular feature launched during the period under review was the provision of Screen Reader versions of these membership periodicals.

### Website

BSBI's comprehensive website, [www.bsbi.org/](http://www.bsbi.org/), is fundamental in making information about plant distribution and taxonomy freely available as a service to the botanical community. The website is updated twice weekly and is under ongoing review to keep it as versatile, informative and user-friendly as possible and, importantly, to make it accessible to both the increasing proportion of the membership requiring mobile access to it, often when engaged in fieldwork, and also to the wider public and the botanical community.

The website offers much information on the Society's activities on a free-to-use basis, with more than 300 webpages and a separate digital archive of botanical publications.

The period under review saw an increase in the number of county webpages on the site, and by 31 March 2023 every vice-county in England, Scotland and Wales, and around half the vice-counties in Ireland, had its own webpage, created in consultation with the County Recorder. Each county page provides contact details of the County Recorder(s) and offers a platform for promoting botanical activity and sharing local resources such as annual reports, Rare Plant Registers, county checklists and newsletters. These pages have helped boost engagement and build capacity at county and regional level, mirroring the national picture and ensuring enduring connectivity at all levels.

New webpages were also created to share details of job vacancies both in BSBI and across the sector; to advertise volunteering opportunities including vacancies on standing committees; to facilitate the giving of donations and legacies; to make the joining process more user-friendly, especially for members opting for paperless membership; to promote the newly-formed Federation of European Botanical Societies, and the BSBI's role within it; and to advertise the programme of winter talks.

In October 2022, a letter was sent to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs calling on the UK Government to honour its commitment to our wild flora. Webpages were created to share both the letter and the reply received in December 2022. Various webpages were also set up to promote the Plant Atlas book, website, country-level summaries, talks, Q&A and media coverage as outlined above.

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### Website (continued)

Resources such as these are helping to raise the Society's profile and to disseminate information to drive a passion for plants, and are establishing the society's website as the first port-of-call for both the accomplished botanist and anyone taking their first steps in botanical recording.

During the year under review, the website attracted a total of 485,448 pageviews. BSBI's maps page, where a distribution map can be generated for any plant species recorded in Britain and Ireland and the change in frequency over the decades can be shown, remained the most popular page, although the launch of the externally-hosted Plant Atlas website on 8th March 2023 is likely to impact the number of pageviews going forwards. Bringing FISCs in-house, and the related appointment of a Training Coordinator, is likely to have impacted the surge in visits to the FISC page. See the table below:

<b>Webpage Views 2022/23 vs 2021/22</b>				
<b>Rank</b>	<b>Webpage</b>	<b>Views 2022/23</b>	<b>Views 2021/22</b>	<b>% Increase/ (Decrease)</b>
<b>1</b>	Maps <a href="https://bsbi.org/maps">bsbi.org/maps</a>	100,322	120,908	-17%
<b>2</b>	Homepage <a href="https://bsbi.org/">bsbi.org/</a>	67,459	68,243	-1%
<b>3</b>	Training Courses <a href="https://bsbi.org/training-courses">bsbi.org/training-courses</a>	14,461	16,310	-11%
<b>4</b>	Field Identification Skills Certificates (FISC) <a href="https://bsbi.org/field-skills">bsbi.org/field-skills</a>	12,744	9,205	+38%
<b>5</b>	Plant ID for beginners <a href="https://bsbi.org/plant-id-getting-started">bsbi.org/plant-id-getting-started</a>	12,469	17,350	-28%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>207,455</b>	<b>232,016</b>	<b>-10.6%</b>

BSBI members, staff and volunteers continued to present lectures to the public and support conservation and outreach projects both locally and nationally; for example, the Ireland Officer gave a talk about rare plants to 40 people as part of Heritage Week. Welsh members supported the National Botanic Garden of Wales' seed banking efforts by providing records and local level information about population status, and also participated in six seed collecting trips. This support resulted in 23 ex-situ conservation seed collections for threatened species for the Millennium Seed Bank's UK Threatened Flora Project and for the seed bank at NBG Wales. Members in Scotland contributed to four national consultations during the year under review: Biodiversity Strategy for Scotland; the Plant Biodiversity Strategy for Scotland; the Scottish Agriculture Bill; and the Tree Planting and Forestry consultation, which drew heavily on case studies provided by BSBI County Recorders.

### Media Coverage

The Society also continued to build links and strengthen relationships with print and broadcast media, both during the Plant Atlas launch and throughout the year. Media coverage of the Plant Atlas is summarised above, but during the period under review, coverage of BSBI activities and comments by BSBI staff and officers, including mention of the Society, also featured in periodicals including: a report in *The Guardian* on Giant Orchids found by BSBI member Hamza Nobes in Oxfordshire; a piece on dandelions in *The Irish Times*; BSBI Scientific Officer Pete Stroh quoted in reports in *The Times* and

# BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

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For the year ended 31 March 2023

### Media Coverage (continued)

*The Guardian* on orchid thefts; BSBI was mentioned in widespread media coverage of research carried out by Dr Sarah Watts, who sits on BSBI's Committee for Scotland, into impacts of climate change on arctic-alpine plants; an article in *The Spectator* about the decline in wildflower identification skills; a report in *The Observer* on Plant Alert, in which BSBI is a partner; radio coverage and report on the UK Government website of the finding of Fen Orchid by 11-year old Tristan Moss and fellow BSBI members during a national BSBI meeting to an MoD site in South Wales; coverage of the new botanical heatmaps, mentioned above, in the TEPoP Bulletin (Terrestrial Evidence Partnership of Partnerships); and the New Year Plant Hunt was covered in *Horticulture Week* and various regional newspapers.

BSBI's Communications Officer also provided an article on wildflower identification in *Wildlife Watch*, the Wildlife Trusts' junior membership magazine which is circulated to c100,000 junior naturalists.

The Society also continued to build its social media profile, and staff, officers and volunteer members offered plant identification support to the wider public on a weekly basis under the #wildflowerhour banner.

	Social media followers as at 31 March		
	2023	2022	% Increase
<b>Facebook (Britain)</b>	11,500	9,500	+21%
<b>Facebook (Ireland)</b>	3,300	3,150	+4.7%
<b>Twitter</b>	41,551	38,838	+7%
<b>Instagram</b>	8,931	6,038	+47%
<b>Total</b>	<b>65,282</b>	<b>57,526</b>	<b>+13%</b>

### Strategic Plan

The adoption and implementation of BSBI's *Strategic Plan 2021-2024* has enabled BSBI to continue to move forward in a sustainable and resilient way, building on almost two centuries of achievements while being ready to grow and adapt to the challenges of a rapidly changing world and deliver its goals. As outlined in the Strategic Plan, there are both opportunities and threats in our environment which BSBI is well placed to respond to, including providing the data to underpin conservation and land management decisions as well as strategy to address biodiversity loss and climate change. BSBI also continues to develop and broaden interest in botany, addresses 'plant blindness' and the need and demand for greater botanical awareness, provides grants and training opportunities to develop plant identification skills and outreach opportunities to support engagement at local and national level.

This year the Society has continued to take steps to build resilience and strengthen foundations, including work to reduce the operating deficit and restructure the Society in order to focus on delivery of our goals, attract further resources and appeal to wider audiences. Some key steps include:

- Strong relationships and brand - Stronger and longer-term partnership arrangements have been put in place with statutory agencies (a key resilience indicator in the Strategy) including with National Parks and Wildlife Service and Natural England. A 5-year grant application was submitted to the Northern Ireland Environment Fund. Consultations have been held and agreements developed with FISC delivery partners, and clear agreements have been put in place with conservation partners to provide access to the BSBI Plant Distribution Database (DDb) for research and conservation. Plant Atlas 2020 has also hugely raised BSBI's profile and strengthened brand recognition.

# BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

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For the year ended 31 March 2023

### Strategic Plan (continued)

- Strong governance - New standing committee recruitment procedures were introduced to improve succession and progression planning, and to advertise roles more widely. These resulted in recruitment of new members from the wider membership for the Science & Data and Events & Communications committees. A range of new ways was explored to discover what BSBI's members in particular, and all those interested in botany, need from the Society. These included the expanded members area of the website, summarised above, and follow-up to the March 2022 BSBI Forum and preparations for the second BSBI Forum, to be held in April 2023; the Forums aim to bring together staff, Trustees and committee members to brainstorm ideas for the Society going forward.
- Effective data management systems - A series of internal meetings was held during winter 2022/23 to review the Society's data priorities; in the year ahead, a Data Development Plan will be published and a Data Support Officer will be recruited, to increase capacity to implement this, alongside the Database Officer.
- Sustainable Business Model - A review of progress against our Income Diversification Strategy at the September Board of Trustees meeting showed good progress in achieving a more sustainable business model and diverse range of income sources for the Society's work. This includes excellent progress on membership growth, good progress on individual giving, further growth in Gift Aid and successfully establishing two new education & training income sources (Identiplant and FISC), as well as establishing good groundwork on building legacies and grant income. The Income Diversification Strategy aims to reach a return on investment (ROI) of 1:3 by the end of three years of having a dedicated fundraiser in post. Trustees have been pleased with the progress so far and agreed to the recommendations, including extending the strategy and targets and the continuation of the work of the Fundraising Manager. Trustees will continue to monitor the progress of the Strategy.
- Passionate, skilled staff and volunteers - Staff posts were reviewed again during the year under review to ensure that the Society has the right roles in place to deliver the strategic goals and support the botanical community. A new Countries Support Manager role was created, to support and develop BSBI's work across the whole of Britain and Ireland, including aiming to provide more consistent support in England and Wales. It is a 15-month post to take the Society through the completion and launch of the Plant Atlas and development of the new Science Strategy, then the Trustees will review the long-term case for this role. A Training Coordinator role was also created, working two days per week, to support and develop Identiplant and FISC.

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### Public Benefit

The Trustees complied with the duty in section 17 (5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant. The Society's core activities include facilitating the recording of the distribution of plants in the wild in its area, and publishing expert works and providing training courses and resources to aid accurate plant identification.

BSBI's website, events and media coverage are all ways in which the Society works to inform and educate the public and those with an interest in conservation and to meet the charitable objects for which it was established. The Board continues to ensure the Society will remain focused on meeting the needs of both its growing number of volunteers, members and also of the wider public, building on its achievements to date and facing the future with increased confidence.

To learn more about BSBI and all it has to offer:



[www.bsbi.org](http://www.bsbi.org)

Also, see:

[www.plantatlas2020.org](http://www.plantatlas2020.org)

[www.BritishAndIrishBotany.org](http://www.BritishAndIrishBotany.org)

[www.PlantAlert.org](http://www.PlantAlert.org)

[www.identiplant.bsbi.org](http://www.identiplant.bsbi.org)



<https://twitter.com/BSBIbotany>



<https://www.facebook.com/BSBI2011>  
<https://www.facebook.com/IrishSectionBSBI/>



<https://www.instagram.com/bsbibotany/>



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/botanical-society-of-britain-and-ireland>



<https://www.youtube.com/botanicalsocietyofbritainandireland>

### 3. Fundraising

Fundraising in BSBI is currently following the roadmap of the *Income Diversification Strategy 2020-2023 (IDS)*, with overarching objectives to increase income to ensure a balanced budget, support the wider Strategic Plan, diversify income streams and maximise existing income; for example, from membership and partnerships.

BSBI employs one member of staff, the Fundraising Manager, to oversee its fundraising, and is subscribed to both the Fundraising Regulator and the Charity Excellence Framework.



Great care is taken to follow good fundraising practices and no complaints have been received, either directly to the BSBI or via the Regulator, with regards to the Society's fundraising activities. Also, BSBI does not undertake fundraising that represents an unreasonable intrusion, is overly persistent or places undue pressure on an individual to donate.

#### Return on Investment (RoI) on Fundraising Activities

The backbone of all BSBI's fundraising activities is the Income Diversification Strategy 2020-2023, developed in 2020 under the guidance of The Foundation for Social Improvement (FSI). This Strategy sets out a clear, realistic, long-term strategy to develop income from diverse and sustainable sources. Trustees have been delivering this Strategy with support from the BSBI Fundraising Manager and others.

Fundraising is an organisational priority within BSBI and is carefully monitored. It is reported by the CEO at every quarterly board meeting and is discussed and reviewed annually in December. Trustees constantly learn from its fundraising activities as some outcomes are more successful than others. One of the ways in which Trustees measure fundraising performance the Return on Investment (RoI) metric and, although RoI must always be looked at in a wider context, it provides a useful guide to assess performance against sector benchmarks, to assess progress over time and of course to ensure that valuable charitable funds are being directed in the right way and value for money is being achieved.

The Chartered Institute of Fundraising ([www.ciof.org.uk](http://www.ciof.org.uk)) does not have a specific approach to calculating RoI; instead guiding it to be appraised on a case-by-case basis.

BSBI has carefully assessed the income sources to be included within its RoI calculation; most donations are included, as are some grants and contracts and a proportion of other income felt to be directly linked to fundraising activities. The costs directly incurred in delivering these activities are included within the RoI calculation.

BSBI has chosen a straightforward RoI methodology: If BSBI incurs £1 on fundraising activities & generates £1.50 fundraising income, the RoI = 1.5

# BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

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Turning now to BSBI's actual RoI on fundraising activities for the year under review, Trustees are pleased to report that overall, for each £1 spent on fundraising, £2.34 of income has been generated, so a RoI of 2.34.

Trustees are also pleased this is an improvement on the previous year (2022 – RoI 2.19). They were pragmatic, however, that the budgeted RoI of 2.97 was not attained, partly because the impact of the Cost-of-Living crisis on current and potential donors and organisations facing escalating operating costs caused a fall in charitable giving and reaching that level then became much more difficult. Nevertheless, the overall picture is one of success and firmly indicates that BSBI is using its resources wisely.

Looking ahead, Trustees will continue to guide and monitor BSBI's fundraising activities whilst working towards the an RoI of 3, which was the conservative average benchmark proposed by the FSI and adopted by Trustees as a long-term aim through its Strategy. The Board will also continue to ensure that BSBI's fundraising activities thrive and the Fundraising Manager has adequate capacity to continue to develop opportunities aligned with BSBI's charitable aims to support BSBI's important botanical work in years to come.

### 4. Financial Review

#### Overview

The Board of Trustees reports Net Expenditure of -£154k (2022: -£18k) for the year under review; an Operating Deficit of -£84k plus investment losses -£70k (2022: Operating Deficit -£41k plus investment gains £23k)

Looking further within these numbers, the Board reports a modest Operating Deficit on the Unrestricted General Fund (BSBI's continuing operations) of -£27k for 2023 which is a slight deterioration vs the £3k Surplus reported 2022, however it is in line with the Board's budget and expectations and BSBI continues its long-term trend of progress towards delivering the Society's operations in a financially sustainable manner as shown below:

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Operating Surplus (Deficit) on the General Fund £000 *	(27) *	3	(15)	(25)	(33)	(61)	(146)	(128)	(178)

\*This, together with the deficit of (£56k) on the Unrestricted Strategic Development Reserve and the small deficits on other reserves together comprise the total net Operating Deficit of (£84k) as per the SOFA.

#### Economic Backdrop

2022/23 has been challenging, with high inflation impacting the Society and the people and organisations connected with it in all manner of ways. After a decade of sub-3% inflation, the combination of post-pandemic demand, the War in Ukraine, supply bottlenecks and other economic & political challenges, inflation ran at its highest level in 30+ years; the 2022 Consumer Prices Index % increase was a huge +10.5%.

The cost of everyday essentials like energy and food has continued to rise much faster than average household incomes. This is what we now know as the Cost-of-Living Crisis. It is against this difficult economic backdrop that we report.

# BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

## ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2023

### Investments and Cash

Total Return on investments (net gains less losses, plus investment income) was -£56,636 (2022: £33,120). As a percentage, this is -8.3% (2022: 4.0%) of the average investment during the year.

RBC Brewin Dolphin (RBCBD) is BSBI's investment manager and, under their guidance, the BSBI Board has selected an ethical investment stance aligned with its charitable aims, with limited exposure to organisations engaged in the fossil fuel industry. Because the fossil fuel industry has performed well and made record profits through higher prices in the year (linked to the Cost-of-Living Crisis described above) performance relative to Benchmark (RBCBD's Risk Profile 6 Balanced benchmark) is muted. Taking the quarter ended March 2023 as an example, Total Return net of fees was:

BSBI's portfolio:	0.99%
Benchmark	3.39%

Even though investment income has been foregone through this approach, Trustees believe its ethical investing approach is the right approach for BSBI, its members & stakeholders. This subject is returned to in the Ethical Position Statement section of this Report.

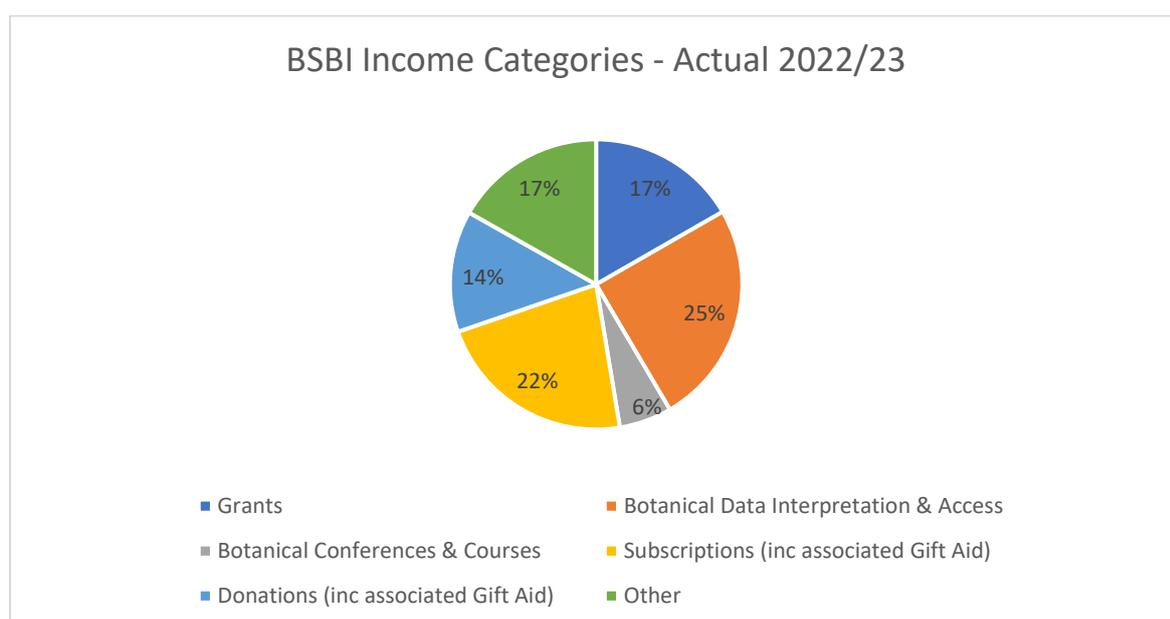
At year end, the Society had Net Assets of £834,425 (2022: £988,139) held as a diversified investment portfolio of £694,839 and Net Current Assets of £139,586.

BSBI held £276,029 Cash at bank at 31 March 2023 (2022: £326,452). This relatively high level of cash holdings is a cautious approach in order to protect against the potential risk of needing cash when the stock market and portfolio valuation is at a low level. This approach to cash holdings proved sensible when managing the negative impacts of Covid and the war in Ukraine. As budgeted, no cash was withdrawn from the investment portfolio in 2023 (2022: £100k).

### Income

The Board is delighted to report that the important £0.5M income milestone was passed in 2023 and, with income reaching £538,427 (2022: £459,438), total income is +17% versus the previous year.

A visual illustration of BSBI's income categories is below:



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### Income (continued)

It is the hallmark of a healthy organisation to have several stable income categories (sources). This profile aims to reduce the risk of a reduction in any one category threatening the future of an organisation and this aim is central to BSBI's *Income Diversification Strategy 2021-2023*. It is pleasing, therefore, to report that BSBI has a total of ten income categories; five (as pictured) and five more contained within the Other category.

**Subscriptions including associated Gift Aid** experienced yet another year of strong growth; +12% to £147k and 28% of unrestricted income, (2022: 30%). As explained earlier, this reflects another pleasing year of growth in membership, this time +12% (2022: +9%). Trustees knew that high inflation was impacting members' pockets and were thankful for the understanding shown towards the 1 January 2023 increase in subscription rates by the Members' unanimous votes in favour at the 2022 AGM. We have now been measuring membership retention as a key KPI (% of members choosing to remain members throughout the year) for a few years and we are pleased that this has edged up slightly to 88% (2022: 87%) in the year. The stability of this KPI, alongside 2022/23 being the strongest year of membership growth in recent years, reinforces our belief that members continue to enjoy and value all that BSBI offers.

At £31k (2022: £10k), **Botanical Conferences & Courses** saw a huge and pleasing increase in the year, this being a return to a full annual programme of face to face and residential events post-Covid.

**Grants** remained more or less static at -1% (2022: +21%) in the reporting period and, at £90k, continues to be hugely important to BSBI (2022: £91k) and we thank our many partners, whom we name in the Thank you section below, for their continued support of all that BSBI achieves.

**Botanical Data Interpretation and Access** generated £134k (2022: £102k) and we are pleased to help the organisations achieve their aims through our work. This includes Natural England, who funded partnership work with BSBI to develop and give access to botanical heatmaps to support decision-making around tree planting and other land management. BSBI continues to work with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), adviser to the UK Government on nature conservation, both through data interpretation and under its National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS) contract and also continues to provide data access to a range of conservation and land management organisations including National Trust, Plantlife, The Wildlife Trusts, Royal Botanic Garden Kew, National Trust Scotland and the Met Office as well as a number of universities, institutes and other organisations to undertake scientific research on a wide range of topics.

**Donations, including associated Gift Aid;** Thousands of members supported the Society this year, and individuals and organisations made donations and contributions of all sizes; from major gifts, sponsorships, grants, for attending events, towards BSBI's important Plant Atlas 2020 project, for sustaining the BSBI Scotland Officer post and gifts in Wills.

**Thank You;** Whilst some of the income described above is given anonymously, BSBI wishes to thank by name the following individuals and organisations who have generously supported BSBI's projects and goals. It also thanks those who have contributed to and tapped into BSBI's huge botanical resources and supported its aims; without whom BSBI could not continue to achieve all that it does:

The Owen Family Trust  
Arnold Clark Community Fund  
The MacRobert Trust  
Greenwings Wildlife Holidays  
The Wildlife Trusts  
The Finnis Scott Foundation  
Chapman Charitable Trust

Sabina Sutherland Charitable Trust  
The William Dean Countryside and Educational Trust  
Habitat Aid  
West Lancashire Wildlife Group  
Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust  
Naturesave Trust

# BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

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For the year ended 31 March 2023

### Income (continued)

BSBI also once again thanks Emeritus Professor Clive A Stace BSc PhD DSc, for his generous gifts of botanical publications, reference materials and time in procuring a full complement of BSBI publications for BSBI's archive located in Harrogate for members' and others' reference and research. We also thank the many others encouraged by Clive to give books for this purpose.

The Society also expresses its gratitude to all the other unnamed organisations and individuals who have generously given donations and grants to BSBI this year. Every amount matters for the advancement of the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of wild plants.

In addition, national statutory agencies and others, namely Natural England (NE), Environment Agency (EA), NatureScot, Department for Food, Environment & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH), National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in Ireland, and National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI), Natural Resources Wales (NRW) continue to be long-term supporters and all the income received from them, whether by grant, for botanical data or by donation, contributes to supporting those of the Society's staff most closely engaged in the programmes and projects of mutual benefit.

**Other Income & Plant Atlas 2020;** The launch in March 2023 of BSBI's *Plant Atlas 2020: Mapping Changes in the Distribution of the British and Irish Flora*, was highly successful and BSBI members alone ordered over a thousand copies from the publisher, Princeton University Press, using the 50% discount available up to 31st March 2023. In all, 1,576 copies were sold in that month, exceeding all expectations. Plant Atlas 2020 income sources have been in several guises; predominantly royalties (as a percentage of the aforementioned book sales) and journal support (£24,260 vs 2022: £276) but also grants, donations & book sales. BSBI's *Alchemilla / Lady's-mantles* handbook was published in April 2022, with its pre-publication launch sales offer having ended in March 2022. As no other new BSBI handbooks launched in 2022/23, income from botanical publications therefore shows a substantial reduction in comparison to 2021/22 when three BSBI handbooks were launched, one of which was the very successful *Dandelions Handbook* selling almost 450 copies, the best-selling launch of the last five years.

### Expenditure

Unrestricted Fund expenditure increased by +24% (2022: +25%) in the year to £601,316 (2022 £484,428) and a few notable highlights are covered below.

At £95,406 (2022: £95,743), **Expenditure on Raising Funds** remained fairly static. Within this, £42,664 (2022: £30,381) represents the staff costs of looking after BSBI's members; the increase is a result of a more accurate attribution of costs between this and the Staff Costs of Fundraising where there is a corresponding reduction.

**Expenditure on Charitable Activities** was £527,060 (2022: £405,085) and saw a planned 30% increase in line with Budget expectations and much of it driven by increased income activities such as Conferences & Courses, where expenditure increased by over £20k to mirror the increased scale of activities post-Covid and income grew by a corresponding amount.

Other cost increases can be explained by changes in activities & scale during the year:

- Cost of Publication sales include £33k; a one-off contractual cost to Princeton University Press on the launch of the *Plant Atlas 2020* publication from which BSBI now receives Royalty income
- Plant data management staff costs of £48,205 (2022: £23,470) show an increase which more accurately reflects how BSBI's Science staff actually spend their time. The corollary is lower Project Staff costs.

# BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

## ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2023

### Expenditure (continued)

- Training Co-ordinator staff costs £3k; a role to look after Identiplant training & FISC assessments, taken in-house in 2022/23, which will be funded by future income from these activities.
- Audit fees of £9k; BSBI is subject to Statutory audit for the first time in 2023 (2022: Independent Examination £2k)
- *BSBI News* costs show a small increase to £38k (2022: £36k) and, on the face of it, there is little to report. Much work has been going on behind the scenes, however, to restrict the impact of huge inflationary increases in the paper pulp industry; in 2023, one copy of *BSBI News* costs 40% more to print than in 2021. So, we are delighted that that over 25% of members have chosen paperless membership which not only helps BSBI save valuable funds but also reduces environmental impact, both important at a time when membership is growing. Paperless membership has saved £3k in 2022/23 and these savings look set to continue and grow.

### Valuing Volunteering

BSBI is immensely fortunate, as it is every year, in being able to supplement its financial resources with the gift of freely and generously volunteered time. Whether it be the gift of botanical expertise to identify and record plant data, serving as Trustee or Committee member, authoring a BSBI handbook, helping to organise and run BSBI's lively calendar of botanical events, generously passing on expert knowledge to teach other botanists, acting as a County Recorder or national plant Referee or something else entirely, all of it is hugely important. This importance is clearer than ever in 2023 when many hundreds of members' recording efforts, under the guidance of County Recorders, over many years, have culminated in the long-awaited publication in Spring 2023 of *Plant Atlas 2020*; a landmark publication made possible only by volunteering.

Although Trustees have always known that the nature and scale of volunteering for BSBI is vast, measuring time and placing an accurate value on it is innately difficult. Research shows that many charities have not even begun to quantify the volunteering they receive. This year, however, the Board is pleased to have made considerable steps forward and the results for 2022/23 are set out for the first time below:

- **20+ types of volunteering exist**
- **11,000+ days volunteered**

Research indicates some charities use National Minimum Wage to value volunteering. Others use different rates such as the £20 per hour rate placed on volunteering by Heritage Fund (known more widely as The National Lottery Heritage Fund).

Individuals undertaking volunteering time to BSBI are from all walks of life, with different experiences and skillsets – many with important botanical knowledge built up over a lifetime - however, it is the coming together of the collective effort that persuades the Board that every hour volunteered is equally important and valuable. As such, a single £20 per hour and 7.5 hour working day are applied in arriving at its valuation.

- **Days volunteered in 2022/23 are valued at a vast £1.7m**

The Board is deeply appreciative of this vast contribution which illustrates BSBI's true scale and reach. BSBI has always been indebted to all of its members and others who volunteer. It simply could not fulfil its charitable objectives without this help and the Board gives its sincere thanks to every person who generously devotes time and effort to helping BSBI thrive; all of these people make BSBI the vibrant and energetic organisation it is today.

# BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

## ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2023

### Valuing Volunteering (continued)

In a wider context, volunteering has an important place in Society. Charities and volunteering exist to make the world a better place.

UK Government's *Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill* is designed to tackle economic & social disparities. Amongst its aims are to ensure every young person in England will have access to volunteering opportunities by 2025. For BSBI's part, the methodologies now developed to capture volunteered time will continue to be developed, deepening BSBI's understanding and leading to offering more opportunities to inspire volunteers of the future.

## **5. Structure, governance and management**

### Constitution

The Society was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales (No. 08553976) on 3 June 2013 with Articles of Association that specify its aims and objects and governance. It is also registered as a Charity in England and Wales (No. 1152954) and in Scotland (No. SC038675). It has no share capital. The Society is governed by a Board of Directors which is known as the Board of Trustees, as all Company Directors are also Charity Trustees. Day-to-day management is delegated to the Chief Executive.

### Board of Trustees (Directors)

The Board of Trustees (Directors) are the Society's legal trustees which governs all its activities and is assisted on a day-to-day basis by the Chief Executive and they together co-ordinate the work of the principal honorary office bearers and the staff, and their interaction with the Board and the Society's membership.

In terms of its Articles of Association, the Society is governed by a Board of Directors, members of which are also Charity Trustees. Trustees are elected by the members of the Society in an Annual General Meeting (AGM). The Board may also co-opt Trustees, who then serve until the next AGM. There is a maximum number of 12 Trustees. One third of the Trustees (other than those currently co-opted) retire by rotation at the next AGM (16 November 2023) and may be re-elected for a renewable term of up to three years, up to a maximum of nine years. Trustees of the Society, all of whom are elected, who served during the year covered by these accounts and were in post at 31 March 2023 and at the date of approval of these accounts, except as noted, are set out below together with their dates of first appointment.

Dr CJ Miles (Chair)	Appointed 25 Nov 2017
Prof AI Denholm	Appointed 3 June 2013, retired 17 Nov 2022
Prof MJ Crawley	Appointed 24 July 2013, retired 17 Nov 2022
Dr CM Cheffings	Appointed 24 Nov 2014
Dr PR Bisson	Appointed 25 May 2016, retired 17 Nov 2022
Dr JS Faulkner	Appointed 25 Nov 2017, retired 17 Nov 2022
Dr S Knapp OBE	Appointed 25 Nov 2017
Mr AD Thomas OBE	Appointed 25 Nov 2017
Dr S Gater	Appointed 4 Dec 2019
Dr M Dean	Appointed 21 Nov 2020
Dr HJ Crouch	Appointed 22 June 2021
Miss KN Jones	Appointed 19 Nov 2021
Mr B O'Kane	Appointed 17 Nov 2022
Prof P Hollingsworth FRSE	Appointed 17 Nov 2022
Dr M Long	Appointed 21 March 2023 (co-opted)

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## ANNUAL REPORT

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### Board of Trustees (Directors) (continued)

At present, the membership of the Board of Trustees is reserved by the Articles of Association for members of the charitable company. All Trustees are made aware of their obligations and the charitable company's Articles of Association and are provided with regular updates on its financial performance and status. Trustees are encouraged to avail themselves of Charity Commission guidance, including "*The Essential Trustee*" and other Trustee training material is made available. Trustees also have unrestricted access to the Board Chair and the Society's staff.

The Board utilises a skills matrix to identify gaps in its group competencies so that selection, induction and training of Trustees is targeted effectively

### Honorary Officers

The principal honorary officers of the Society are the President, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the Honorary General Secretary, Honorary Company Secretary and Honorary Treasurer. They are assisted by three staff members: Chief Executive, Head of Science and Finance Manager.

Details of other office bearers, including County Recorders and the panel of Referees and Specialists, the Hon. Field Meetings Secretary and the Editor-in-Chief of *British & Irish Botany* are to be found in the *BSBI Yearbook 2023*.

### The Staff

As at 31 March 2023 the Society employed 12 staff (2022: 10), equivalent to 9 full time posts (2022: 9), to work with the principal honorary office bearers in co-ordinating, interpreting and supporting the work of its volunteers and in the administration of the Society's affairs. The Chief Executive leads the team of employees, which is structured into these key functions:

- Science & Data
- Countries Support
- Membership & Communications
- Finance

The Countries Support Team underwent significant change during the year, with one departure and three new joiners:

- Jim McIntosh, BSBI's Scottish and Senior Country Officer for many years, retired in November 2022 and Trustees thank him for his vast contribution to BSBI's activities.
- James Harding-Morris took up the new role of Countries Support Manager in Nov 2022 to head the Countries Support team.
- Trustees welcomed Matt Harding as Scotland Officer in November 2022.
- Chantal Helm took up the new role of Training Co-ordinator for Identiplant and FISC; both long-established training courses, taken "in house" by BSBI from 2023.

### Committees

The *BSBI Yearbook 2023* sets out full details of BSBI's Committees, more details of which are outlined below; the BSBI website also lists the members of Committees and the Board, and provides contact details for each.

The Country Committees for England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland (comprising in this context Northern and the Republic of Ireland), give a more localised focus to the Society's work and play an important

# BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

## ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2023

### Committees (continued)

role in the governance structure, working alongside the Countries Support Manager and Country Officers to drive engagement at national level and showcase their country's work to the membership and to the wider public.

For example, the **Committee for Scotland** plays an important role in the organisation of the annual Scottish Botanists' Conference, which attracts a huge number of participants; the **Committee for Ireland** supports the Ireland Officer with organisation of, and participation in, Ireland's Spring and Autumn Conferences; the County Recorders who sit on the **Committee for Wales** lead on recording activities there. The **Committee for England** holds well-attended online Annual Meetings. Editors of the four country newsletters sit on Country Committees and each does an invaluable job communicating information that matters to BSBI's membership in their respective countries.

BSBI has three Standing or Operational Committees, as follows:

The **Events & Communications Committee** organises national events, conferences and field meetings, such as the New Year Plant Hunt and the British and Irish Botanical Conference (formerly the Annual Exhibition Meeting). It also has oversight of the Society's outreach and social media activities, website and newsletters. It is assisted by the Society's Communications Officer and other staff members as and when required.

The **Science & Data Committee** has primary responsibility for BSBI's plant distribution and monitoring studies, including maintaining the County Recorder network and the Panel of Plant Referees and Specialists. It also has oversight of the Society's scientific journal, *British & Irish Botany*, and administers grants to assist the publication of local Floras and similar works. It is assisted by the staff of the BSBI Science and Data team. Its Science & Research sub-Committee allocates research grants.

The **Skills & Training Committee** co-ordinates these activities for the Society, and awards training and plant study grants. It also has oversight of the Society's series of Handbooks for the identification of difficult plants. This Committee is also developing the "Botany for All" programme and assembled a range of partners from external groups to help deliver the goal of building a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop the skill base.

The Board of Trustees has two permanent sub committees:

The **Nominations, Awards & Governance Committee** has responsibility for identifying and recommending candidates for election as Trustees, for assuring a steady flow of nominations for awards and for recommending to Trustees any changes to the governance arrangements of the Society.

The **Finance Committee** was created in late 2022 when, in the light of BSBI's growth, diversification and in the interests of good governance, the Board decided to convert its Investment Committee to Finance Committee. It works closely with the Finance Manager, as Committee Secretary, to assist the Board in ensuring there is a framework for accountability; for examining and reviewing systems and methods of control both financial and otherwise, and for ensuring BSBI complies with all aspects of the law, relevant regulations and good practice. This and its other objectives are set out in a Terms of Reference approved in December 2022. Under its Terms of Reference, the Finance Committee advises the Board on its Investment Policy Statement and its Ethical Position Statement and reviews these guidance documents every three years or more often if appropriate. The Honorary Treasurer is an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee and while this role is on hold, Finance Committee continues to fulfil the responsibilities set out in its Terms of Reference.

# BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

## ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2023

### Investment Policy Statement

The Society's investment powers are governed by the Trustee Act 2000. The Trustees have approved an Investment Policy Statement and have delegated discretionary management of the Society's investments to its Investment Manager, RBC Brewin Dolphin (RBCBD).

The Society's **Finance Committee** (previously **Investment Committee**, see above) is made up of a minimum of three Trustees and normally with the Chair of the Board, CEO and Committee Secretary in attendance meets once a year with the Society's Investment Manager to review investment performance and to hold them to account. Also, the performance and effectiveness of the Finance Committee in carrying out its Terms of Reference is self-evaluated on a three-yearly basis and its findings reported to the Board for scrutiny.

BSBI requires diversification amongst shares, bonds and cash, capable of delivering income and portfolio growth combined at 2% over inflation in the long term after expenses. Investment income is accumulated however it remains readily accessible through realisation of liquid investments.

### Ethical Position Statement

While there are no legal, Charity Commission (CC) or Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) requirements to adopt an ethical investing stance, Trustees recognise the importance of BSBI investing in a socially responsible manner which promotes the protection and health of the natural environment. This aim is carefully balanced with the desire to optimise Total Return from investments to fund BSBI's work.

With these aims in mind, BSBI works to an Ethical Position Statement (EPS), updated in September 2022, which sets out the above. The EPS, for example, aims to restrict BSBI's exposure to the fossil fuel sector.

This environmentally aware approach is not only firmly aligned with BSBI's charitable aims but increasingly with the direction of travel in the charity sector, expectations of the world at large and CC's ethical investing advice contained in CC14 *Charities & Investment Matters, a Guide for Trustees*. Now reflecting a long-awaited update, announced on 1 August 2023, in response to the 2022 *Butler-Sloss* High Court case. CC14 now formally clarifies that charities can adopt investment policies and approaches with ethical and social considerations, even where this will lead to a lesser financial return.

Environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues are integrated into RBCBD's investment analysis and stewardship and engagement are important parts of its investment process and in March 2023, RBCBD reported that BSBI's investment portfolio has:

- (1) Half of the underlying benchmark exposure to companies involved in fossil fuels (based on revenues)
- (2) 89% of the underlying investments held within collective funds have an ESG risk rating of medium or lower.
- (3) 0% exposure to companies with over 10% or more of revenues involved in the production and/or distribution of palm oil
- (4) 0.1% exposure to companies with over 10% or more of revenues involved in growing genetically modified (GM) crops or the development and/or cultivation of GM seeds & plants

RBCBD is committed to stewardship, ensuring the responsible ownership of assets and it continues to engage with funds to improve climate change reporting and to support investment into renewable infrastructure. Through its engagement partner, Columbia Threadneedle, it also has numerous engagements with leading corporations around protecting and setting biodiversity targets. This work aims to creating long term value leading to sustainable benefits for the environment and society.

# BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

## ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2023

### Ethical Position Statement (continued)

More information can be found in RBCBD's Annual Stewardship and Engagement Report here: <https://www.brewin.co.uk/stewardship-policy>

Through these actions and monitoring, BSBI feels reassured its investment activities actively promote the health and protection of the natural environment.

### Grant-making Policy

Details of BSBI's Policy in relation to grants for the publication of works on the British and Irish flora, for training and education courses and for botanical study and research are set out on the BSBI website.

### Risk Management

Like all charities, BSBI operates in an environment in which there are uncertainties and risks. The Board of Trustees works to identify risks to which BSBI is or could be exposed and to then either mitigate or manage the impact.

The Trustees maintain a Risk Register which documents the major risks identified, under the themes of Governance, Operations, Finance, Environmental & Legal. The Board reviews the Risk Register at its quarterly Board meetings and agrees actions. Trustees are satisfied that this system addresses, mitigates and manages BSBI's exposure to the major risks. Examples of ways in which financial risks are mitigated include:

- i. The Society has in place a comprehensive range of insurance policies in relation to its activities and associated risks, including those for Public & Employer's Liability, Professional Indemnity and Trustee Indemnity.
- ii. The Society maintains a balance sheet in which listed investments represent substantially all of its net assets. Consequently, it is exposed to market risk which may materially affect its financial performance in any year of account. The risk is mitigated in a number of ways: the investment portfolio is diversified and is subject to the discretionary management of independent professional Investment Managers, who follows BSBI's Investment Policy and agreed investment risk profile, reporting to the Trustees in writing quarterly and in person annually; the Trustees review the financial performance arising from its operations and its investments separately and take a long-term view of investment performance against industry benchmarks and other expectations.
- iii. BSBI operates in Britain, Ireland and overseas and must handle transactions in UK £ Sterling, Euro €, United States Dollar \$. Exchange rate risk is managed by most of its transactions, balances and investments being denominated in UK £ Sterling.
- iv. The Society is exposed to cash flow and liquidity risk as a result of running a deficit budget. It aims to manage investments and cash to optimise investment income & gains and bank interest. Because the individual investments in BSBI's investment portfolio are freely traded, it is possible to withdraw funds on short notice and this mitigates risk.
- v. An Income & Expenditure Budget is set and approved annually in advance by the Board which is then rigorously applied to financial decisions made throughout the year.
- vi. The letting of contracts and payment of invoices is strictly controlled by the Chief Executive and the Finance Manager, so as to ensure that the Society enters into only appropriate financial commitments within its means.

# BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

## ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2023

### Risk Management (continued)

- vii. With the oversight of BSBI's Finance Committee, the Finance Manager and Chief Executive monitor bank balances and ensure there are sufficient liquid funds to meet liabilities as they fall due.
- viii. The UK's exit from the European Union on 31 January 2020 has had no material impact on the operations or finances of the Society and this has been kept under review from time to time. Income from outside the UK represents a small percentage of the Society's income and BSBI has continued to conduct its activities throughout the biogeographical area encompassing Great Britain, Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, and to engage with botanists further afield.
- ix. The impact of the Covid pandemic and the risks posed have now all but disappeared however the learning opportunity and flexible mindset it taught will be remembered and used in years to come.

### Principal Risks & Mitigations:

Notwithstanding the above, significant risks can develop and remain and there are currently two risks to which Trustees' attention is particularly focussed, as noted below:

**1) Loss of Data, electronic functions or other important information; Trustees have identified an operational risk particular to the BSBI Plant Distribution Database (DDb) which holds in excess of 52 million plant distribution records and is a critical BSBI resource.**

**Risk:** A digital & data review was carried out which identified that IT issues such as server failure, a lack of specialist knowledge and resource to manage and maintain the DDb, and / or cyber-attack, exposes BSBI to being unable to carry out core functions and activities if these risks were not to be addressed.

**Mitigation:** Trustees are addressing the situation by strengthening BSBI's resources; a Data Support Officer has been recruited and from Summer 2023 will work alongside the existing Database Officer, each with a clear programme of work, including increasing knowledge and user guidance for the DDb and developing an emergency recovery plan against which progress can be measured.

**2) Non-compliance with Irish Charity Registration; Trustees have identified a legal risk arising from BSBI not being registered with the Charities Regulator in Ireland.**

**Risk:** Non-compliance with Irish Charity legislation which exposes risks or even legal liabilities thought to be around the legitimacy of BSBI's activities in Ireland under its UK governing documents.

**Mitigation:** Trustees are addressing the situation and have applied to the Charities Regulator in Ireland for BSBI to become a charity in Ireland. A response is currently awaited.

### Reserves Policy

The Board reviewed its Reserves Policy in June 2023. This Policy sets out why BSBI holds its particular level of reserves and how the Board seeks to ensure financial sustainability.

When this Policy was last reviewed in Spring 2022, BSBI's income was felt to be relatively stable / low risk. Since then:

- Income has grown; total income is >£0.5M for the first time
- New income categories have arisen; Royalties

# BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

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### Reserves Policy (continued)

- Income categories have diversified; Identiplant, FISC
- Income commitments have become longer term; see Looking Ahead section

These achievements mean that income has become relatively more diversified, stable and therefore lower risk. This increasing robustness gives the comfort that BSBI seeks through its *Income Diversification Strategy 2021-2023*.

The Board of Trustees has carefully reflected and concludes that £0.5m (LY: £0.5M) - an average of now 9 months' (LY: 1 year's) operating expenditure - is an adequate and appropriate minimum level of Reserves which will help BSBI achieve a financially sustainable & resilient business model.

Meanwhile, the General Fund actually stands at £0.7M at 31 March 2023 (LY: £0.8M). Therefore, there is a modest excess / buffer above the minimum of £0.5M.

This level affords the Board capacity to respond to - or seek out - opportunities. If opportunities arise to deliver BSBI's aims even more effectively, the Board may consider designating further funds to ringfence what it requires to achieve that opportunity.

Looking ahead, as income streams are even further diversified and become more robust, BSBI becomes more resilient and risk further reduces, the Board may in time feel it is able to further reduce the minimum reserves, perhaps to the equivalent of 6 - 9 months' operating expenditure.

The Society has two Unrestricted Funds:

- 1) **The General Fund**; this provides Working Capital for the continuation of the Society's activities and as a buffer against fluctuations in income. It affords BSBI the ability to promote itself and, critically, to continue to raise further funds to ensure its long-term financial sustainability. Trustees currently consider that £0.5M is the minimum acceptable level and this is periodically reviewed.
- 2) **The Strategic Development Fund**; this designated fund was created following a decision by the Board in June 2020. Its purpose is to fund the one-off or short-medium term costs of delivering the Strategic Plan; building financial resilience more quickly and effectively than might otherwise be possible. Expenditure from this Fund is reported at Note 14.

Three Restricted Income Funds are maintained, currently valued at £3,469 (2022: £4,864):

- 1) The **Presidents' Award Fund** provides for an annual award for outstanding contributions to botany. (£400pa in 2018-2022, £300pa in 2023-2027)
- 2) The **Welsh Flora Fund** is normally for small ad hoc grants towards botanical publications relating to North Wales. This year, £750; the North Wales proportion of the *Plant Atlas 2020* book / project launch costs, are met from this Fund.
- 3) The **Scottish Officer Fund** received income of £20,000 this year (2022: £16,000) restricted to meet expenditure relating to the post of and activities undertaken by the Scotland Officer. This fund continued to be fully expended during the year.
- 4) The **Scottish Training Programme** received donation income of £5,385 from The MacRobert Trust (2022: £NIL) which was fully expended on the Scotland Officer's time costs of organising and delivering four training workshops and five field training days in Summer 2022 and five mini-workshops during the Scottish Botanists' Conference in November 2022.

## **6. Looking Ahead**

BSBI's recently published Plant Atlas 2020 gives a better understanding of why, and how rapidly, the distributions of plants are changing in Britain and Ireland and highlights deeply concerning declines. To address these, it is important to place plants' needs at the heart of land use decision making, research and monitoring and build awareness of wild plants and skills in studying them. BSBI's science, data and members, the botanists recording wild plants, sharing their knowledge and fostering a love of plants, make a unique contribution to the evidence and action needed to ensure wild plants thrive and are valued, and to shape and prioritise efforts to conserve them.

In the year ahead, the Society will continue to build a diverse community of botanists and to share knowledge and foster a love of plants through field and indoor events, training, grants, publications, periodicals, communications, website, social media, outreach and membership. In order to meet high demand for plant identification training and skills assessment, work will continue to develop and expand the provision of Identiplant and FISC.

BSBI will develop further guidance and support for County Recorders, in response to their feedback, through new pages and guidance on our website. The first year of the new Targeted Aquatic Plant project, funded for three years by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, will be delivered in 2023.

Trustees are delighted to report that a grant application to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs' (DAERA) Northern Ireland Environment Fund has been successful. A new five-year project will now be established to grow botanical skills and evidence for nature recovery, by recruiting a Botanical Skills Officer based in Northern Ireland to organise plant identification and recorder training and field events, develop partnerships and increase participation in the National Plant Monitoring Scheme. This project will also work with the Society's wider team to increase data flow and use BSBI data to target conservation and land use decision-making in Northern Ireland.

Over the next year, BSBI will continue to build on the success of the Plant Atlas 2020 launch, by collecting and providing high quality, impartial data and interpretation for research and to help address biodiversity loss and climate change. Aims include increasing the number of records on the BSBI Distribution Database; testing the new data entry app; implementing the members' data access project and encouraging further participation in the New Year Plant Hunt and the National Plant Monitoring Programme.

BSBI will continue to work in partnership with Natural England and others to further develop Botanical Heatmaps as a tool to target positive conservation measures and ensure that land use decisions, such as tree planting and agriculture, cause no harm to those species-rich open habitats that are so important for biodiversity and carbon storage, such as peatlands. Greater links will be forged with partners in other countries to widen this Heatmap approach. BSBI's data will be used to start a new GB Red List project, in partnership with Natural England and the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, which will provide an assessment of threat to plant species in Britain, based on internationally recognised IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) criteria. Red Lists are crucial in helping conservation organisations to prioritise and target conservation action.

In 2023, the Society will also consult on, further develop and publish a Science Strategy for the next ten years and a Data Development Plan; a Data Support Officer will be recruited to work alongside the Database Officer to increase capacity to implement this plan.

Finally, over the winter of 2023/24 work will continue to review, update and refresh the BSBI Strategic Plan for the next three years, 2024-2027, building on recent work and in consultation with members, who remain at the heart of all the Society's endeavours and successes.

**BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**For the year ended 31 March 2023**

**7. Reference and administrative details**

Founded & Name	1836, as the Botanical Society of London (Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland name adopted in 2013)
Incorporation	Registered 3 June 2013 A Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales No. 08553976
Registered Office	28 Chipchase Grove, Durham, DH1 3FA
Registered Charity	England and Wales No. 1152954 Scotland No. SC038675
Bankers	CAF Bank Ltd, Kings Hill, West Malling, ME19 4TA HSBC UK Bank plc, Birmingham, B1 1HQ
Investment Manager	RBC Brewin Dolphin, 12 Smithfield Street, EC1A 9BD
Auditor	WMT LLP, 4 Beaconsfield Rd, St Albans, AL1 3RD
Legal Advisers	Stone King LLP, 91 Charterhouse St, EC1M 6HR
Principal Officers	
Chair of the Board of Trustees	Dr CJ Miles
Honorary Treasurer	On hold
President	Ms L Farrell (until 17 Nov 2022) Dr M Sheehy Skeffington (from 17 Nov 2022)
Honorary General Secretary	Dr S Gater
Company Secretary	Dr S Gater
Chief Executive	Ms JC Hanmer
Head of Science	Dr KJ Walker
Finance Manager	Ms JE Etherington
Website	<a href="http://www.bsbi.org">www.bsbi.org</a>

## 8. Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also the Directors for the purpose of company law) are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations. Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustees must prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- a) select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- b) observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- c) make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- d) state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- e) prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue to operate.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

### Statement as to disclosure of information to auditors

The Trustees confirm that so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information (as defined by section 418(3) of the Companies Act 2006) of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware. They have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as Trustees in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charitable company's auditors are aware of that information.

### Auditors

WMT Chartered Accountants were appointed auditors to the Society and a resolution proposing their reappointment will be put to the Annual General Meeting.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



Dr CJ Miles  
Trustee & Chair of the Board



Mr AD Thomas OBE  
Trustee & Chair of Finance Committee

## **BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

### **INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

#### **Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of The Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, 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 Financial Reporting Standard 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2023 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; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and Regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 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 charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

#### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

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

#### **Other information**

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

## **BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

### **INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves.

If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

#### **Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006**

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

- the information given in the Trustees' report, which includes the directors' report prepared for company law purposes, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report included within 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 charitable company 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 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 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 take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the trustees' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

#### **Responsibilities of Trustees**

As explained more fully in the Trustees' responsibilities statement, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

## **BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

### **INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

#### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

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

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

Discussions with and enquiries of management and those charged with governance were held with a view to identifying those laws and regulations that could be expected to have a material impact on the financial statements. During the engagement team briefing, the outcomes of these discussions and enquiries were shared with the team, as well as consideration as to where and how fraud may occur in the entity.

The following laws and regulations were identified as being of significance to the entity:

- Those laws and regulations considered to have a direct effect on the financial statements include UK financial reporting standards, Company Law, Charity Law and Tax and Pensions legislation.
- Those laws and regulations for which non-compliance may be fundamental to the operating aspects of the charity and therefore may have a material effect on the financial statements include compliance with the charitable objectives, public benefit, data protection, health and safety legislation and employment law.

Audit procedures undertaken in response to the potential risks relating to irregularities (which include fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations) comprised of: inquiries of management and the Trustees as to whether the entity complies with such laws and regulations; enquiries with the same concerning any actual or potential litigation or claims; inspection of relevant legal correspondence; review of Trustee meeting minutes; testing the appropriateness of journal entries; and the performance of analytical review to identify unexpected movements in account balances which may be indicative of fraud.

No instances of material non-compliance were identified. However, the likelihood of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is limited by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the entity's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed. Irregularities that result from fraud might be inherently more difficult to detect than irregularities that result from error. As explained above, there is an unavoidable risk that material misstatements may not be detected, even though the audit has been planned and performed in accordance with ISAs (UK).

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

**BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF  
BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charitable company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

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

**Other matters**

We draw to your attention the fact that the comparatives are unaudited.

**Use of our report**

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006, and to the charitable company's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members and Trustees 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 any party other than the charitable company, the charitable company's members as a body and the charitable company's Trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

WMT.

**Elizabeth Wicks (Senior Statutory Auditor)**

**26 September 2023**

For and on behalf of:

WMT Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors  
4 Beaconsfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 3RD

**BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**  
**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING AN INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)**  
**For the year ended 31 March 2023**

		Unrestricted Funds 2023	Restricted Funds 2023	Total Funds 2023	Unrestricted Funds 2022 (unaudited)	Restricted Funds 2022 (unaudited)	Total Funds 2022 (unaudited)
	Note	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOME FROM</b>							
Donations, Grants and legacies	2	284,852	25,385	310,237	278,307	16,000	294,307
Charitable activities	3	207,596	-	207,596	147,221	-	147,221
Investments	4	20,497	97	20,594	17,820	90	17,910
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total</b>		512,945	25,482	538,427	443,348	16,090	459,438
<b>EXPENDITURE ON</b>							
Raising of funds	5	95,406	-	95,406	95,743	-	95,743
Charitable activities	6	500,525	26,535	527,060	388,685	16,400	405,085
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total</b>		595,931	26,535	622,466	484,428	16,400	500,828
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>OPERATING (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS</b>		<b>(82,986)</b>	<b>(1,053)</b>	<b>(84,039)</b>	<b>(41,080)</b>	<b>(310)</b>	<b>(41,390)</b>
<b>OTHER RECOGNISED (LOSSES)/GAINS</b>							
Realised (losses)/gains on investments	9	60,423	299	60,722	66,283	335	66,618
Unrealised (losses)/gains on investments	9	(129,755)	(642)	(130,397)	(43,135)	(218)	(43,353)
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total (losses)/gains on investments</b>		(69,332)	(343)	(69,675)	23,148	117	23,265
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>NET (EXPENDITURE)/INCOME</b>		<b>(152,318)</b>	<b>(1,396)</b>	<b>(153,714)</b>	<b>(17,932)</b>	<b>(193)</b>	<b>(18,125)</b>
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>							
Total funds brought forward		983,275	4,864	988,139	1,001,207	5,057	1,006,264
Net movement in funds as above		(152,318)	(1,396)	(153,714)	(17,932)	(193)	(18,125)
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>		<b>830,957</b>	<b>3,468</b>	<b>834,425</b>	<b>983,275</b>	<b>4,864</b>	<b>988,139</b>
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**BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

**BALANCE SHEET**

**As at 31 March 2023**

	<b>Note</b>	<b>2023</b>		<b>2022 (unaudited)</b>	
		<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>					
Investments	9		694,839		751,475
			<hr/>		<hr/>
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Stocks	10	26,962		23,681	
Debtors	11	62,562		78,147	
Cash at bank		276,029		326,452	
			<hr/>		<hr/>
		365,553		428,280	
<b>Liabilities</b>					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	12	225,967		191,616	
			<hr/>		<hr/>
<b>Net Current Assets</b>			139,586		236,664
			<hr/>		<hr/>
<b>Net Assets</b>			834,425		988,139
			<hr/>		<hr/>
<b>Funds</b>					
<b>Restricted funds</b>	13		3,468		4,864
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	14				
General Fund			670,351		804,108
Strategic Development Fund			160,606		179,167
			<hr/>		<hr/>
			834,425		988,139
			<hr/>		<hr/>

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



Dr CJ Miles, Trustee &  
Chair of the Board



Mr AD Thomas OBE, Trustee &  
Chair of Finance Committee

Company registration number 08553976. Charity registration number 1152954 (England and Wales) and SC038675 (Scotland)

**BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS**

**For the year ended 31 March 2023**

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**

**For the year ended 31 March 2023**

	<b>Note</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022 (unaudited)</b>
		<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Cash used in operating activities	17	(51,205)	(22,291)
Cash generated from interest on deposits		782	23
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Net cash used in operating activities</b>		<b>(50,423)</b>	<b>(22,268)</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Proceeds from sale of investments	9	-	100,000
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Net cash provided by investing activities</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>100,000</b>
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>		<b>(50,423)</b>	<b>77,732</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year</b>		<b>326,452</b>	<b>248,720</b>
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>		<b>276,029</b>	<b>326,452</b>
		<hr/>	<hr/>

**Analysis of Changes in Net Debt**

	<b>At 1 April 2022 £</b>	<b>Cashflow £</b>	<b>At 31 March 2023 £</b>
Cash at Bank	326,452	(50,423)	276,029

# **BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

## **NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS**

**For the year ended 31 March 2023**

### **1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

#### **Basis of accounting**

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, subject to the revaluation of investments to market value, in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, effective January 2019) ('Charities SORP') and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Practice (UK GAAP) as it applies from 1 January 2015.

The Trustees have assessed whether the use of the going concern basis of accounting is appropriate and have considered possible events or conditions that might give rise to significant doubt on the ability of the Charity to continue as a going concern. This assessment covered a period of 12 months subsequent to the date of approval of these financial statements. The Trustees have concluded that the Charity has adequate financial and other resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future, and that there are no factors of which they are aware which could put in jeopardy the Charity's going concern status during or beyond this period. Accordingly, the financial statements are prepared on the going concern basis.

#### **Judgments in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty**

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgments, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported for assets and liabilities as at the balance sheet date and the amounts reported for revenues and expenses during the year. The nature of estimation means the actual outcomes could differ from those estimates.

There are no material key sources of estimation uncertainty that could have an impact on the financial statements.

#### **Statement on Public Benefit**

Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland is a public benefit entity under the Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102) and has selected its accounting policies accordingly.

#### **Recognition of Income**

Income is accounted for when the Society has entitlement, there is reasonable certainty of receipt and the amount is measurable. Income is deferred in respect of funding where the funding relates to a future period in order to match it to the expenditure profile. The specific bases used are as follows:

Subscription income and the related Gift Aid (where applicable) is accounted for in the period to which it relates. As subscriptions cover calendar years, the portion attributable to the subscription year falling after the balance sheet date is deferred.

Income from grants and donations for specific purposes received in advance of the related expenditure is carried forward as deferred income. Income is only deferred where restrictions are imposed that amount to pre-conditions for use. Contract income and grants received in arrears are recognised in line with underlying expenditure or activities, or, where appropriate, on a straight line or similar basis.

Legacies are recognised as receivable when the amount receivable is reasonably certain (i.e. probable) as to amount and timing, and not until probate has been granted in respect of the legatee's estate.

# **BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

## **NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)**

**For the year ended 31 March 2023**

### **Recognition of Income (continued)**

Donated facilities are recognised where the value to the Society can be quantified.

Investment Income is recognised when earned.

Other income is recognised when received.

The Society's County Recorders are authorised to charge, in their own names, for services in extracting and interpreting data relating to their own area from the Society's Plant Distribution Database (DDb), for commercial use, on the understanding that these charges represent a partial recovery of expenses incurred in their voluntary services to the Society. Such transactions are therefore outside the scope of these accounts.

### **Expenditure**

Expenditure is recognised when a liability is incurred. Contractual arrangements are recognised as services are supplied.

Costs of raising funds are those costs incurred in attracting income.

Charitable activities comprise those costs incurred by the Charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them. Where employees are engaged in more than one of the Society's charitable activities (botanical data interpretation & access, botanical conferences, courses & education, botanical publications and website or governance costs) which cannot be allocated directly, the costs are apportioned on the basis of estimated time spent or by other reasonable assumptions.

Grants awarded are charged in the year when the offer is given to the recipient unless the grant is conditional on a future event. Training grants are charged when the conditions attached to the grant or award has been met and disbursement has been approved. Publication grants are charged when disbursed, normally shortly before publication.

Governance costs, which are included in the costs of charitable activities, include those associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the Society and include the professional fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the Charity.

### **Fixed assets and depreciation**

The Society's policy is to capitalise expenditure on fixed assets amounting to more than £1,000 per individual item. When fixed assets are recognised, depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset over its expected useful life, which for office equipment such as computer hardware and other similar assets is estimated at four years. Fully depreciated assets are written off.

### **Investments**

Investments are carried in the Balance Sheet at market value. The related net unrealised gain or loss on the portfolio is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities separately from other income and expenditure. Realised net gains or losses arise on the sale of individual investments and represent the net total of the excess or deficit of net sales proceeds over the original cost.

### **Stocks**

Publications and other stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

# **BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

## **NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)**

**For the year ended 31 March 2023**

### **Financial Instruments**

The Society only enters into basic financial instruments transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities such as debtors and creditors. Financial instruments are initially measured at transaction value. They are assessed at the end of each reporting period for objective evidence of impairment. If objective evidence of impairment is found, an impairment loss is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

### **Debtors, Cash at Bank and Creditors**

Debtors – short term debtors are measured at transaction price, less any impairment losses.

Cash and cash equivalents – cash and cash equivalents comprise cash at bank and in hand and demand deposits with banks.

Creditors – short term creditors are measured at the transaction price.

### **Holiday pay accrual**

A liability is recognised for short-term compensated absences where employees have accumulated a right to paid annual leave (holiday pay) but had not fully used it at the balance sheet date. The accrual is measured at the undiscounted salary and social security cost of the future holiday entitlement.

### **Operating leases**

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged to expenditure on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease.

### **Pensions**

Staff employment contracts include a provision for an employer's pension contribution based on a fixed percentage of salary to be paid into a personal pension policy established by the member of staff. Contributions are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities as they fall due.

### **Foreign Currencies**

Transactions in foreign currencies are translated at rates prevailing at the date of the transaction. Balances denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the rate of exchange prevailing at the year-end. All exchange differences are taken to the Statement of Financial Activities. The Society currently transacts in Euros € and US Dollars \$.

### **Taxation**

The Society is recognised as a Charity by HMRC and its activities therefore support its primary purpose of delivering its stated charitable objectives. This means its income and capital gains are exempt from Corporation Tax. Also, Gift Aid income (at 25 pence in £) is recoverable on subscriptions and donations received under a Gift Aid declaration made to BSBI by a member or donor. The Society receives no similar exemption in respect of Value Added Tax (VAT). Income and Expenditure is reported net of VAT and irrecoverable VAT is reported as an expense.

### **Fund accounting**

The Society's accounts are an amalgamation of funds which are defined as follows:

Unrestricted funds – are those funds available for general or designated uses by the Society at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of its stated charitable objectives.

Restricted funds – are those funds where restrictions were established by the original donor(s) as to what type of expenditure was permitted.

All income and expenditure of the Society is included in the Statement of Financial Activities.

**BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)**

**For the year ended 31 March 2023**

<b>2. DONATIONS, GRANTS AND LEGACIES</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Subscriptions (including associated Gift Aid)	147,426	131,961
Donations (including associated Gift Aid) and sundry income	47,503	38,451
Grants	89,632	90,895
Legacies	291	17,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Unrestricted Fund income	284,852	278,307
Restricted Income: Donations	25,385	16,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	310,237	294,307
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES</b>		
Botanical data interpretation and access	134,199	101,998
Botanical conferences and courses	31,368	9,875
Botanical publications	17,769	35,072
Royalties and journal support	24,260	276
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	207,596	147,221
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>4. INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS</b>		
Investment income (Restricted £97 (2022 - £90))	19,812	17,887
Bank deposit interest	782	23
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	20,594	17,910
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>5. EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS</b>		
Staff Costs of Membership & Communications	42,664	30,381
Staff Costs of Fundraising	40,370	52,999
Other fundraising costs	280	351
Publicity	2,052	2,281
Investment management costs & finance charges	10,040	9,731
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	95,406	95,743
	<hr/>	<hr/>

£42,664 (2022: £30,381) represents the staff costs of looking after BSBI's members. This includes managing the membership database, communicating with BSBI's members, directly, via BSBI's website and through social media channels about subscriptions, joining BSBI, telling members about educational training, conferences, courses and handbooks and generally ensuring members' needs are met. The increase is a result of a more accurate attribution of costs between this and the Staff Costs of Fundraising where there is a corresponding reduction.

**BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)**

**For the year ended 31 March 2023**

<b>6. EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Botanical Data Interpretation and Access</b>		
Project staff costs (Restricted £25,385 (2022 £16,000))	164,072	178,942
Project staff overhead costs	12,310	9,867
Grant direct costs	22,929	26,138
Grants awarded for scientific work (Restricted £400 (2022 £400))	2,900	2,894
Support staff costs and expenses	<u>60,002</u>	<u>40,932</u>
	<u>262,213</u>	<u>258,773</u>
<b>Botanical Conferences, Courses and Education</b>		
Conferences and courses	23,572	1,139
Training Co-ordinator staff costs and expenses	3,181	-
Grants awarded for training and education	<u>8,072</u>	<u>(1,897)</u>
	<u>34,825</u>	<u>(758)</u>
<b>Botanical Publications and Plant Data</b>		
<i>BSBI News</i> and other similar publications	38,058	35,361
Cost of publication sales	42,873	19,123
Grants awarded for botanical publications	2,000	2,250
Plant data management staff costs	<u>48,205</u>	<u>23,470</u>
	<u>131,136</u>	<u>80,204</u>
<b>Governance</b>		
Strategy Implementation Costs (Restricted £750 (2022 £NIL))	17,542	8,987
Trustee indemnity insurance	838	975
Governance staff costs and expenses	54,717	41,606
Audit fees (2022: Independent Examination fees)	9,000	2,250
Professional & HR advice, Payroll & accounting platforms (See note)	6,310	6,109
Committee costs and expenses	696	1,147
Increase / (decrease) in accrued holiday pay	504	(166)
Recruitment, Training & other governance costs	<u>9,279</u>	<u>5,958</u>
	<u>98,886</u>	<u>66,866</u>
<b>Total (Restricted £21,150 (2022 £16,400))</b>	<u>527,060</u>	<u>405,085</u>

Note - Includes fees of £3,854 (2022: £1,521) for WMT LLP for non-audit services.

The Society awards three types of grants, each after due consideration by different committees:

- (1) **Grants for scientific or research work;** those with potentially publishable results are normally up to £1,000.
- (2) **Grants for training and education;** these are normally up to £250 and are given towards relevant and appropriate third-party courses. Occasionally, grants of up to £1,000 per annum are given for plant study or to support graduates studying for higher degrees in subjects particularly close to the Society's objects. With BSBI taking Identiplant training "in-house" from 2023, grants are also given to a small number of students to cover the study cost, currently £250 (see Note 16)
- 3) **Grants for botanical publications,** normally up to £1,000 for county Floras written by members. In total, 24 individuals (2022: 19) were awarded grants in the year and the total value of grants disbursed in the year was £10,872 (2022: £3,247). The individual grants were awarded on the basis of applications made by individuals as described above. BSBI also provided £2,100 grant funding towards the Young Darwin Award Scholarship which is a Field Studies Council initiative, supporting young people with a real interest in the natural world and inspiring the next generation of 'Darwins'. Read more here: [www.field-studies-council.org](http://www.field-studies-council.org)

Honorary officer costs are those of the President, Honorary General Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and Company Secretary. Costs of other Board members are included in committee expenses. Expenses reimbursed to Board members are disclosed in Note 7 on Related Party Transactions.

# BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2023

### 7. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Neither the Society's President nor Trustees received remuneration for their services or fees for professional work commissioned by the Society.

Many individuals elect not to claim all amounts due to them under the Society's policies and the total annual amount, although unquantified, is considered to be similar to the amount actually disbursed. Other than in exceptional circumstances, these individuals waive the right to claim expenses for meetings and events attended where an element of personal benefit arises.

As well as giving time to BSBI to fulfil their roles as Trustees & other honorary or Committee positions, Trustees also gave donations to BSBI during the year; some gave by name and others gave anonymously to BSBI's Hardship Fund. Trustees also gave donations of £118 towards BSBI events (2022: £125).

The following transactions took place during the year:

Amounts totalling £483 (2022: £610) were reimbursed to 4 (2022: 4) trustees who made expense claims for reimbursement of out-of-pocket travel, subsistence and other costs, of which, £145 (2022: £106) is outstanding at the year end.

Dr S Gater, Trustee, began working as Identiplant tutor & hub co-ordinator for Durham Wildlife Trust (DWT) in Spring 2023. There were no transactions during the year however, in 2023/24, he will receive fees from DWT of £150 per student tutored and DWT will, in turn, receive £250 per student from BSBI, covering tutor fees and co-ordination costs.

Dr CM Cheffings, Trustee, is employed as Ecosystem Analysis Team Leader by Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). During the year, BSBI received contract income of £20,483 (2022: £20,038) directly from JNCC under its National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS) contract and also £9,225 (2022: £NIL) indirectly, via Natural England, to support JNCC in considering how species data can help with the design of Local Nature Recovery and Environmental Land Management Schemes.

Dr S Knapp, Trustee, is employed as Head of the Algae, Fungi and Plants Division by The Natural History Museum (NHM). In November 2022 NHM supplied meeting room and lecture theatre facilities free of charge for BSBI's British & Irish Botany Conference (2022 - £NIL). No payments were made to the Linnean Society during the year for the hire of meeting rooms where Dr S Knapp was also President and Chair (2022: £83).

Dr M Dean, Trustee, was employed as an Associate Tutor at Edge Hill University (EHU) until August 2021 and has continued to maintain an informal relationship with the University. BSBI provides EHU with access to its DDb in exchange for EHU resources such as e-journals.

Mr AD Thomas, Trustee, is Honorary Vice-President of Field Studies Council (FSC). During the year, BSBI paid FSC £10,250 (2022: £NIL) for the provision of accommodation, catering and meeting facilities for two member events in Summer & Autumn 2022; the Annual Summer Meeting and the Recorders' Conference.

Miss KN Jones, Trustee, purchased botanical data services on behalf of Nassington Parish Environment Plan from which BSBI received income during the year of £129 (2022: £NIL).

## **BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

### **NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)**

**For the year ended 31 March 2023**

#### **7. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS (continued)**

Prof Pete Hollingsworth, Trustee from 17 November 2022, is Director of Science and Deputy Keeper at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE). During the year, BSBI paid RBGE £1,066 for BSBI events held there. RBGE has also provided free of charge services for other BSBI events and office facilities used by BSBI's Scotland Officer.

Dr M Long, co-opted Trustee from 21 March 2023, is employed as an Ecologist for Conservation Planning and Grasslands within the Scientific Advice and Research Directorate of National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). During the year, BSBI received grants of £40,752 (the £ equivalent of Euro denominated grants) from NPWS for BSBI's Ireland Officer, for an Aquatic Plants Project and towards the costs of launching Plant Atlas 2020 in Ireland. In earlier years, Dr Long has been the key contact in arranging grant funding to BSBI for the "Irish Grasslands Project"

Employees Ms JC Hanmer (Chief Executive) and Dr KJ Walker (Head of Science), received remuneration during the year earned in their respective roles. Amounts totalling £6,879 (2022: £5,537) were reimbursed to these employees for out-of-pocket travel, subsistence and other costs, of which, £1,563 (2022: negative £218 due to advances made) is outstanding at the year end.

Dr KJ Walker's partner, Ms C Pinches, is employed as Principal Scientific Analyst, by Natural England (NE) the Government's Advisor for the natural environment. During the year, BSBI received £60,758\* from NE (2022: £49,073) for the collection, verification & sharing of vascular plant data and other work in England. Also, Dr Walker is a Fellow of UKCEH, through which he is able to use facilities at UKCEH Wallingford in order to facilitate research. BSBI reported income of £12,750 (2022: £9,000) from UKCEH during the year under a three-year contract to deliver information re non-native plant species, of which £12,750 (2022: £9,000) is outstanding at the year end. *\*Excludes £9,225 received on behalf of JNCC.*

**BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)**

**For the year ended 31 March 2023**

<b>8. STAFF COSTS</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Salaries	349,322	309,392
Social Security costs	33,063	28,211
Pension costs	16,143	15,120
Increase / (decrease) in accrued holiday pay	504	(166)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total staff costs	399,032	352,557
	<hr/>	<hr/>

No employee earned in excess of an annual equivalent of £60,000 during the year (2022: nil).

The average number of employees during the year was 11 (2022: 10). At the reporting date there were 12 employees (2022: 10) of which, one (2022: one) resident in Republic of Ireland.

The Trustees consider two members of staff to be key management personnel; the Chief Executive and Head of Science. Their combined gross salaries, social security costs and employer's pension contributions constituted 31% (2022: 32%) of the total above.

The Society fulfils its obligations under the Pension Act 2008 by offering a workplace pension into which eligible employees are automatically enrolled and contributions are paid at or above the minimum required rate set by the Pensions Regulator, currently 8%. Also, a standard Personal Retirement Savings Account (PRSA) is offered to BSBI's employees in Ireland into which BSBI contributes the same % as UK based employees.

No taxable employee benefits were paid during the year (2022 - £NIL).

**BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)**

**For the year ended 31 March 2023**

<b>9. INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>At Market Value</b>		
At the beginning of the year	751,475	818,355
Investment income retained	19,813	17,887
Investment management charges deducted	(6,774)	(8,032)
Transfers to bank current account	-	(100,000)
Realised (loss)/gain in the year	60,722	66,618
Unrealised (loss)/gain in the year	(130,397)	(43,353)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Market value at the end of the year	694,839	751,475
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>At Original Cost</b>	<b>691,757</b>	<b>617,013</b>
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The original cost is the cost of the individual investments when first acquired. The investments are managed on a discretionary basis by the Society's investment managers. The investment objective is to generate an income and growth total return of inflation plus 2% per annum over the long term, after expenses. The investments are diversified as follows:

Equities - UK	19.6%	23.6%
Equities - Overseas	41.9%	43.0%
Bonds	14.1%	9.3%
Global Investments	6.8%	6.8%
Property	3.1%	4.4%
Private Equity	2.3%	3.4%
Other	8.2%	6.3%
Cash	4.0%	3.2%
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	100.0%	100.0%
	<hr/>	<hr/>

**10. STOCKS AND WORK IN PROGRESS**

Botanical publications	26,962	23,681
	<hr/>	<hr/>

Stocks of botanical publications are held by the Society's sales agent, Summerfield Books (2007) Ltd. Provision is made for slow-moving stocks; £4,768 (2022: £4,782). Sales proceeds are shown in note 3.

**11. DEBTORS**

Debtors	16,904	16,775
Accrued income	40,743	56,110
Prepayments	4,915	5,262
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total debtors	62,562	78,147
	<hr/>	<hr/>

**BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)**

**For the year ended 31 March 2023**

**12. CREDITORS**

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Amounts falling due within one year</b>		
Creditors	12,810	12,103
Taxation and social security	26,907	21,111
Pensions	3,821	3,624
Holiday pay accrual	9,312	8,808
Other accrued expenses	17,468	13,648
Deferred income	155,649	132,322
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total creditors	225,967	191,616
	<hr/>	<hr/>

Deferred income of £95,246 (2022: £78,275) relates to subscriptions received for the calendar year 2023 therefore 75% of such annual subscriptions relating to the remaining nine months of the calendar year after the balance sheet date are deferred.

Deferred income also arises in a similar way from grant, contract or publication income and from advance bookings for field meetings and conferences. £231,804 (2022: £165,767) was added during the year to the £132,322 (2022: £105,155) deferred income balance brought forward and £208,477 (2022: £138,600) was released from it, leaving £155,649 (2022: £132,322) carried forward at year end.

**13. RESTRICTED FUNDS**

	<b>Presidents' Award</b>	<b>Welsh Flora</b>	<b>Scottish Officer</b>	<b>Scottish Training Programme</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
At 1 April 2021	3,026	2,031	-	-	5,057
Investment gains / (losses)	70	47	-	-	117
Income	54	36	16,000	-	16,090
Expenditure on charitable activities	(400)	-	(16,000)	-	(16,400)
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
At 31 March 2022	2,750	2,114	-	-	4,864
Investment gains / (losses)	(194)	(149)	-	-	(343)
Income	55	42	20,000	5,385	25,482
Expenditure on charitable activities	(400)	(750)	(20,000)	(5,385)	(26,535)
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
At 31 March 2023	2,211	1,257	-	-	3,468
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

The Funds share in investment gains and losses only if permitted under the terms of the grant. The Funds are held as shown in note 15.

**BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)**

**For the year ended 31 March 2023**

**13. RESTRICTED FUNDS (continued)**

The **Presidents' Award Fund** is an expendable fund to provide for an annual award of £400 (will be £300 from 2023) made to individual(s) by the Presidents of BSBI and the Wild Flower Society for outstanding contributions to botany. The 2022 Award of £400 was made to A John Richards for his book: *Field Handbook to British and Irish Dandelions, BSBI Handbook No. 23*.

The **Welsh Flora Fund** provides funding for botanical publications relating to North Wales. In March 2023, the Fund was used to meet £750 expenditure; being the North Wales proportion of the costs of translating into Welsh & launching in Wales the *Plant Atlas 2020: Mapping Changes in the Distribution of the British and Irish Flora*. There were no disbursements in 2022.

The **Scottish Officer Fund** receives income which has been donated specifically towards the employment costs of the Scotland Officer. The remaining costs of this post are met by grant funding.

The **Scottish Training Programme** received donation income of £5,385 from The MacRobert Trust (2022: £NIL) which was fully expended on the Scotland Officer's time costs of organising and delivering four training workshops and five field training days in Summer 2022 and five mini-workshops during the Scottish Botanists' Conference in November 2022.

**14. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS**

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>General Fund</b>		
At the beginning of the year	804,108	880,471
Incoming resources	529,352	441,202
Resources expended	(556,410)	(437,922)
Investment (losses)/gains	(56,699)	20,357
Designated to Strategic Development Fund	(50,000)	(100,000)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
At the end of the year	670,351	804,108
	<hr/>	<hr/>

The purpose of the General Fund is to provide working capital for the Society's activities and to provide a buffer against fluctuations in income.

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Strategic Development Fund</b>		
At the beginning of the year	179,167	120,736
Resources expended	(59,520)	(46,506)
Investment Income	3,592	2,146
Investment (losses)/gains	(12,633)	2,791
Designated from General Fund	50,000	100,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
At the end of the year	160,606	179,167
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The purpose of the Strategic Development Fund is to meet expenditure designed to deliver BSBI's Strategy which will place BSBI on a more financially sustainable footing. The Funds are held as shown in note 15.

**BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)**

**For the year ended 31 March 2023**

**15. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS**

	<b>Investments</b>	<b>Other Net</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>Assets</b>	<b>£</b>
		<b>£</b>	
<b>As at 31 March 2023:</b>			
<b>Restricted Income Funds</b>			
Presidents' Award Fund	2,211	-	2,211
Welsh Flora Fund	1,257	-	1,257
Scottish Officer Fund	-	-	-
<b>Unrestricted Income Funds</b>			
General Fund	530,763	139,588	670,351
Strategic Development Fund	160,606	-	160,606
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	694,837	139,588	834,425
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>As at 31 March 2022:</b>			
<b>Restricted Income Funds</b>			
Presidents' Award Fund	2,750	-	2,750
Welsh Flora Fund	2,114	-	2,114
Scottish Officer Fund	-	-	-
<b>Unrestricted Income Funds</b>			
General Fund	567,444	236,664	804,108
Strategic Development Fund	179,167	-	179,167
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	751,475	236,664	988,139
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

**16. COMMITMENTS**

As at 31 March 2023, The Society had commitments to 23 training and research grants awarded in Spring 2023, totalling £9,298 (2022: 30 grants, £11,485). There were no Flora grant commitments (2022: nil). Grants for external training are normally paid after the completion of the training course or research. Grants awarded before Spring 2023 are recorded as expenditure, having been either paid or accrued at year end.

As at 31 March 2022, BSBI was committed to two three-year term office leases, one for the Head of Science's office and one for BSBI archives. These leases expired in 2022 & early 2023 and the premises are now occupied on a rolling lease basis without a contractual commitment to a fixed end date. The total non-cancellable commitment under these rolling leases is calculated at 1 month for each lease, amounting to £238 (2022: £2,417).

In the normal course of business, other agreements exist with suppliers, none of which is onerous.

**BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)**

**For the year ended 31 March 2023**

**17. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE) TO NET CASH FLOW USED IN OPERATING ACTIVITIES**

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Net income / (expenditure) for the year	(153,714)	(18,125)
Adjustments for:		
Losses / (gains) on investments	69,675	(23,265)
Dividends and interest from investments and deposits	(20,594)	(17,910)
Investment management charges	6,774	8,032
(Increase) / decrease in stocks	(3,281)	221
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	15,585	1,423
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	34,350	27,333
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net Cash inflow/(outflow) generated by/ (used in) operating activities	(51,205)	(22,291)
	<hr/>	<hr/>