



BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

**For the Year Ended
31 March 2024**

**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 2024

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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 2024. 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 objectives 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 complete the delivery of the *BSBI 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 has helped 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 to deliver the Strategy's Goals during the period under review.

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 188 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. The period under review saw one of the fullest programmes of field meetings and indoor events ever offered by the Society, with 53 events held across Britain and Ireland, aimed at botanists of all skill levels. This programme aimed to introduce newcomers to the Society, foster the mentoring of individuals' field identification skills, encourage existing members to work together and help to build a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop 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 2024, the channel had attracted almost 4,000 subscribers and many of the webinars had been viewed thousands of times.

Events across Britain and Ireland

In total, 53 events were held during the period under review; these included field meetings aimed at beginner botanists; recording days from Donegal to Essex and from Devon to West Ross; a pilot event run jointly with the Royal Entomological Society, aimed at bringing together those interested in conservation management for both plants and invertebrates; events for intrepid botanists – examples include a survey of lakes in Co. Galway (chest waders advised) and a week-long boat journey to gain records from the Barra islands in the Outer Hebrides; workshops, residential recording weeks and specialist training meetings targeted at both improver and expert botanists; and conferences in England, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland aimed at bringing together botanists to pursue themes relevant to the day, and to publicise the results of recent research.

The Annual Summer Meeting was held in Killarney, in the Republic of Ireland, over a long weekend in May 2023; it attracted 90 participants who enjoyed various daytime excursions, including a boat trip (thanks to funding support from the National Parks & Wildlife Service) across the scenic Killarney Lakes, and a series of evening talks were recorded and made available to all via the BSBI website.

The British and Irish Botanical Conference (formerly known as the BSBI Annual Exhibition Meeting) was held at Newcastle University in December 2023 as a joint event with the Natural History Society of Northumbria (NHSN); it attracted 300 bookings and featured ten talks, four flash talks, a Dandelion ID workshop, two behind-the-scenes tours of the NHSN archive, 38 exhibits and a pop-up bookshop. The talks were recorded and uploaded to the BSBI YouTube channel, where they had attracted a total of 3,731 views by the end of March 2024. The Annual General Meeting was held online as a separate event, to allow participation from members from across Britain and Ireland; it was preceded by two talks, one on urban botany and the other an update on the Society's achievements over the previous year.

The Scottish Botanists' Conference, held at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh in November 2023, attracted 200 visitors who enjoyed nine talks, seven mini-workshops and 28 exhibits. The talks were recorded and had attracted 1,530 views by 31st March 2024. The Irish Spring Conference attracted 90 attendees and featured nine talks and a workshop, while the Irish Autumn Conference attracted 75 attendees and five talks; both events were hosted by the National Botanic Garden, Glasnevin. The residential Wales Annual Meeting and AGM, scheduled to take place in Montgomeryshire over a long weekend in July 2023, was cancelled by the venue at three days' notice due to a health and safety issue; Committee for Wales rose to the occasion and hosted a successful online event later in the year.

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The Committee for England held their Annual Meeting online in February 2024 with three talks which were recorded and had attracted 516 views by 31st March 2024.

Two residential meetings aimed at botanical recorders were held during the period under review: a week-long recording event in Carmarthenshire, Wales in July 2023 and a weekend Recorders' Meeting in Shrewsbury in October 2023, when 53 participants enjoyed a selection of talks and workshops; four of the talks were recorded and the videos have since been viewed 676 times.

Activities to help build a diverse community of botanists continued into the winter months. The Society's annual New Year Plant Hunt (NYPH), now in its thirteenth 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. Innovations to support the January 2024 NYPH included a pre-registration facility; digital spotter sheets to support first-time participants; guidance on how to take plant photographs which, once uploaded via the NYPH recording app, would maximise the likelihood of accurate identification; and an increased pre-publicity drive, in partnership with other conservation organisations. These innovations, alongside the usual dedicated support team providing encouragement and helping with identification, arguably contributed to the huge surge in participation: 3,336 people took part – a 97% increase on the previous year, and the highest total in the event's history.

A series of four online winter talks attracted a total 476 attendees; talks were recorded and the videos had been viewed 1,486 times by the end of March 2024.

Focus on training

The table below summarises BSBI's individual training events in 2023/24. Thanks to funding from the Irish National Parks & Wildlife Services (NPWS) for a three-year Targeted Aquatic Plant Project, we were able to offer a series of field-based workshops across Ireland and online training which reached hundreds of people (see the Table below) and also to purchase an underwater drone to assist with future survey work for rare aquatic species.

Plant group(s)	Training Events 2023/24					
	Target area	Funded/ charged	No	In-person or online?	Participants on the day	YouTube views
Ferns	Britain & Ireland	£5	1	O	Online link only	1,123
Grasses, Sedges & Rushes	Perthshire, Scotland	Free	1	IP	16	n/a
Grasses	Perthshire, Scotland	£40 (£20 BSBI members/ students) including Identification booklet	1	IP	20	n/a
Aquatic plants: field training events and herbarium workshops	Ireland	Free/ funded by NPWS	9	IP	26	n/a
Aquatic plants: webinars	Ireland	Free/ funded by NPWS	2	O	108	1,001

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Plant families	Various locations across Scotland	£40 (£20 BSBI members/ students) including Identification booklet	2	IP	21(13+8)	n/a
Sedges	Westmorland, England	Free	1	IP	15	n/a
Dandelions	East Midlands, England	Free	1	IP	18	n/a
Ferns	Co. Wexford, Ireland	Free	1	IP	11	n/a
Ferns for Beginners	Lanarkshire, Scotland	£40 (£20 BSBI members/ students) including Identification booklet	1	IP	15	n/a
Urban plants	Co. Armagh, Northern Ireland	Free	1	IP	6	n/a
Conifers	Shrewsbury, England	£2	1	IP	15	n/a
Brambles	Ayrshire, Scotland & Co. Durham, England	Free	3	IP	10	n/a
Plant ID for Habitat Surveys	Stirlingshire, Scotland	Free	1	IP	10	n/a
Total			26		291	2,124

By combining in-person and digital activities, BSBI has grown its programme of training events and expanded 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 skills 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 or the Scottish Botanists' Conference 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. This allows members attending these Conferences to hear more about the work their subscriptions help to support. Where appropriate, grant recipients are also encouraged 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, by piloting urban botany walks, and developing of guidance to support more members to lead these walks in future, 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.

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	Grants			
	2024 applications	2024 Awards	2023 applications	2023 Awards
Training Grant	66	32	29	23
Plant Study Grant	2	2	7	3
Science & Research Grant	4	3	5	3
Total	72	37	41	29

Bringing FISC and Identiplant in-house

The period under review saw the first full year of BSBI coordinating both the Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC) tests, the industry standard for assessing field plant identification skills, and Identiplant, the online tutor-led plant ID course.

201 students attended Identiplant in 2023, supported by 44 tutors. Extensive recruitment of tutors was then undertaken, led by BSBI's dedicated Training Coordinator, Dr Chantal Helm, supported by the Identiplant Management Team. Online events, and in-person events in Scotland, were held to increase capacity and a bespoke online learning platform was also developed in-house to deliver the course. This was launched at the end of 2023, and 2024's intake saw a record number (460) of applications, of which 292 students were accepted, supported by 66 tutors (32 of these were new tutors). The high demand for places is thought to be partly driven by its excellent reputation and also by recent changes in environmental legislation and the introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain in England. This has presented the challenge of supply far exceeding demand in parts of the UK, especially England, and work is ongoing to recruit even more tutors and to explore opportunities to adapt the Identiplant delivery model to support even more students in future, despite capacity limitations, and to promote and extend the course into Ireland (both Northern Ireland and the Republic).

The 2023 transition of FISC co-ordination from its founders to BSBI, with the support of the BSBI Training Coordinator and substantial input from the FISC Development Working Group, resulted in the introduction of a number of new procedures and policies (including a rigorous QA process), which were successfully adopted by six new FISC Providers and seven new Assessors recruited in 2023, allowing for the delivery of 26 FISCs to 392 candidates, the highest number to date. This resulted in a surplus, meeting financial targets two years early.

A closer working relationship was fostered with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), the professional body for the large majority of individuals interested in undertaking a FISC. A new FISC logo (shown below) was designed and registered as a BSBI trademark, thereby protecting the brand. Similar to Identiplant, demand for FISCs has also grown and similar capacity limitations are evident. Work is ongoing to raise the profile of the FISC Assessor role to encourage more botanists to consider taking it on and there are plans to expand FISC into Scotland and Wales in 2025.



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.

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 in the accurate recording of plant distributional data; during the period under review, our botanical surveys, recording activities and partnership initiatives continued to deliver specific scientific and conservation objectives, including the monitoring 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. 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, boosted by the recent publication of our third plant distribution atlas, for providing a recognised evidence base which is increasingly relied on by scientific researchers and conservation practitioners.

Plant Atlas 2020

When Plant Atlas 2020, the Society's third plant distribution atlas and the most in-depth survey of British and Irish flora ever undertaken, was published in March 2023, we said that it would serve as an essential resource for the study and conservation of our wild plants and their vitally important habitats for decades to come. This is already proving to be the case, with initiatives outlined below and later in this report such as the updating of the GB Red List and the multiple references noted in the media to Plant Atlas 2020 key findings. As part of funding agreements with Natural England and NatureScot, two summary reports have also been produced on the findings of Plant Atlas 2020 for England and Scotland.

GB Red List

In partnership with Natural England and the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH), BSBI has been working to update the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) threat status list for vascular plants. Red Lists are crucial in helping conservation organisations to prioritise and target conservation action. The GB Red List (Cheffings & Farrell, 2005) compared trends between the first and second BSBI atlas date classes (1930-69 vs 1987-99) and then applied an IUCN threat status, using the relevant IUCN criteria, for all native and archaeophyte taxa. These threat statuses have, in large part, remained unaltered since publication, as to update most of them would have required the availability of a third atlas dataset. Thanks to the efforts of BSBI members and numerous other individuals and organisations, we now have a verified dataset for a third atlas (2000-19), and so it is possible to begin work on updating the GB Red List, comparing 1987-99 data with that of 2000-19.

Natural England (NE) has generously provided funds for BSBI and UKCEH to undertake this review, with the aim of publishing the new GB Red List in March 2025. This year UKCEH have provided BSBI with the trend analysis relevant to two of the five main IUCN criteria, Area of Occupancy (AOO; Criterion

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A) and Extent of Occurrence (EOO, Criterion B). BSBI has reviewed the results and shared these with members of the Species Status Assessment Group for comment and discussion. We have also collated information from reports and key contacts for those species (usually Nationally Rare) for which we require detailed population data (used for Criterion C and D) and used all of this to assess threat status with a view to completing a draft before a meeting of experts in Taunton in spring. In the year ahead, further field work and threat assessment work will be needed before signing off by IUCN and publication of the new GB Red List.

Botanical Heatmaps

We continued to build on the successful launch in 2022 of our botanical value maps and 'heatmaps' for England, based on the plant records held in the BSBI Distribution Database (DDb) and developed in partnership with Natural England. This year we have worked with NE colleagues in developing an interactive app that can be used by practitioners involved in tree-planting proposals and guidance on how to use it. Similar work has also started on developing heatmaps in Scotland, for NatureScot and a feasibility study of heatmaps in the Republic of Ireland is planned in the coming year for the National Parks and Wildlife Service. These maps are aimed at identifying areas of high botanical value and ensuring that tree-planting and other land management takes these and other wildlife interests into consideration.

United Kingdom Species Inventory (UKSI)

During the year under review, we worked on an update for plant taxa on the UK Species Inventory (UKSI) which ensures that major data aggregators such as the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas, Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), iRecord, iNaturalist, all have access to the same taxonomic concepts, thereby ensuring efficient data-flows between different organisations and data platforms. The BSBI leads on this work for plants in the UK and an update to the UKSI has been long overdue.

Members' data access to the Distribution Database

The BSBI Plant Distribution Database (DDb) is one of the world's largest databases of biological records. 1.3 million new botanical occurrence records were added to it during the year under review, and as of 31 March 2024, it held over 56 million plant records. The Society is committed to increasing access to the information it holds for the benefit of its members and for the plants that we all care so passionately about. By providing greater access to these data, we hope to encourage more recording amongst members and increase the conservation, research and educational activities carried out by the Society and our partners throughout Britain and Ireland. During 2023 and into early 2024, we put in place the systems and guidance needed to implement members' data access to the DDb in preparation for a launch to members in April 2024. The essential preparations included creating a new log-in for members, a rigorous system to agree and check access levels with County Recorders, and a communications plan to keep members informed of the various stages of the roll-out.

BSBI Data Management Plan

During the year under review, we developed BSBI's Data Management Plan, a 2-year plan with priorities for our data work, and expanded our data management capacity with the appointment of a Data Support Officer, who consulted with County Recorders on their data support needs and then developed a 'documentation website' which provides guidance on how to access BSBI data and use our Distribution Database. The extra capacity in our data team has also allowed us to develop tools to upload data sets. Over the coming year the documentation website will support user training and the upload tools will help County Recorders by expanding options for data upload.

BSBI Recording App

In 2023/24 we continued to co-develop and test the new BSBI Recording App with an increasing group of recorders (using an online forum for submitting feedback and via sessions at the Autumn Recorders' Meeting). By 31 March 2024, more than 28,000 records had been submitted via the App by 171 recorders. In the coming year the BSBI Recording App will be made available via app stores.

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National Plant Monitoring Scheme

The Society also continued to be an active partner in the National Plant Monitoring Scheme, helping to promote the Scheme at internal and external events and on social media, and encouraging members to adopt a square for monitoring and County Recorders to take on mentorship roles.

Botanical recording at country and county level

During the period under review, 12 new County Recorders were appointed, swelling the network to 208 and working alongside 91 expert taxonomic referees to provide the essential volunteer support which underpins all the Society's activities and achievements. New local recording groups were set up in Stirlingshire, in Lothian and in Leicester, and a North East Scotland Recording Network, spanning Kincardineshire, South and North Aberdeenshire, was also established. Members and supporters continued to contribute to targeted country level recording projects to re-find plant species of national, regional or local conservation importance which have not been recorded in recent decades: the Lost Rarities in England initiative; Rare Plant Project Ireland; and the Scottish Hectad Rare Plant Project.

Notable plant finds by BSBI members during the year under review included several species new to Wales: hare's foot clubmoss *Lycopodium lycopus*, recorded by Robbie Blackhall-Miles and never previously found south of Scotland; yellow oxeye *Bupthalmum salicifolium*, recorded by BSBI trustee and creator of 'No Mow May' Dr Trevor Dines; triplet lily *Triteleia laxa*, recorded by Richard Jones; and nursery bitter-cress *Cardamine occulta*, recorded by Dr Tim Rich. In Ireland, there were new sites for dense-flowered orchid *Neotinea maculata* in Co. Antrim (recorded by David McNeill) and in Co. Sligo (by Eamon Gaughan); a new hybrid orchid on Rathlin Island: *Dactylodenia st-quintinii* (*Gymnadenia borealis* x *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*), recorded by David McNeill and Ric Else; a second Sligo sighting of early orache *Atriplex praecox* recorded by Eamon Gaughan; the northernmost Irish record (and county first) of large-flowered butterwort *Pinguicula grandiflora* at Lough Carra, Co. Mayo, found by Chris and Lynda Huxley; and a new Co Offaly record of dark-red helleborine *Epipactis atrorubens* found at a cutaway bog by Dan Singer.

BSBI Science Strategy 2024-2029

Work on a BSBI Science Strategy continued through 2023; consultations were held with members and key partners to help the Science Team identify the high-level themes, goals, priorities and foundations, and develop the objectives, strategy and tactics going forward. This work culminated with the publication in March 2024 of the BSBI Science Strategy 2024-2029. The three goals are: to provide high-quality evidence on the British and Irish flora, including its taxonomy, biogeography and ecology; to provide high-quality evidence on the state of our flora and how it is responding to environmental and human drivers; and to provide impartial scientific advice to ensure BSBI data have impact in supporting nature recovery.

Goal 3: Disseminate information to drive a passion for plants

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 portfolio of publications and periodicals, its website and social media activity, and its outreach and training programmes all operate in order to complement and engage a growing membership base to contribute to our 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.

Publications and periodicals

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. Until the end of December 2023, BSBI members continued to benefit from a 50% discount offer on the print version of BSBI's third plant distribution atlas, *Plant Atlas 2020*, published to great acclaim in March 2023 by Princeton University Press, and they also received substantial offers during the period under review on the purchase of several other botanical books authored by BSBI members but not published

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by the Society. By the end of March 2024, the website printatlas2020.org, hosted by BRC/UKCEH, had attracted 686,872 pageviews by 224,067 users.

The five authors of *Plant Atlas 2020* were also the recipients of the 2023 Presidents' Award; this is awarded annually by the Presidents of the Wild Flower Society and the BSBI. The presentation was made at the British & Irish Botanical Conference by BSBI President Micheline Sheehy Skeffington, with Janet John and Sheila Wynn representing the Wild Flower Society.

Although no new titles were published in the series of BSBI Handbooks for difficult plant groups, work continued under the auspices of the recently-appointed Handbooks Editor, Dr Liz Kungu, and a small publications group, to bring new handbooks into the pipeline. As an innovation in 2023, many titles in the BSBI's catalogue of publications, including the entire series of Handbooks and a selection of county Floras, were made available at a competitive price as PDF eBooks, thereby increasing their accessibility and e-sales while also raising the Society's profile as a publisher of essential botanical publications in both traditional and digital formats.

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. 22 scientific papers were published in the fifth volume of *British & Irish Botany*. Prof Ian Denholm, Editor-in-Chief since the journal's inception, handed over in February 2023 to Dr Stuart Desjardins, with the first issue of the sixth volume of the journal scheduled for publication in June 2024.

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.

A digital 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, by year end, more than 33% (vs 2023; 25%) of members had opted into this format.

Membership

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. A BSBI Hardship Fund also exists to support existing members wishing to continue their association with the Society in the event of unforeseen financial difficulty. While calls on this Fund have been modest so far, we look forward to being able to help others in years to come.

BSBI is delighted to report continued membership growth across its geographical areas. Following last year's record annual increase in membership coinciding with the publication of *Plant Atlas 2020*, we have seen excellent consolidation and retention of members, continuing the growth of the profile of the charity and the number of people supporting its aims. We continue to grow and add to our member benefits and to work to use the income we receive from membership to best achieve our strategic goals, and hope to continue to encourage record numbers of members to join the charity for the eighth consecutive year. The positive financial impact of this continued growth is described in the Financial Review section 4 below.

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	Membership as at 31 March		
	2024	2023*	% Increase
UK, Isle of Man & Channel Islands	3,615	3,436	+5%
Ireland	384	323	+19%
Rest of World	57	51	+12%
Total	4,056	3,810	+6%

* 85 Northern Ireland members were erroneously included in the Rest of World field in 2023. This has been corrected in the above table.

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. Five BSBI members, nominated by their fellow members for outstanding contributions to botany, received BSBI Awards under a new initiative launched in 2022 by the BSBI Nominations, Awards and Governance Committee. Malcolm Macneill, Ian McNeill, Richard Pryce and David Welch received awards recognising outstanding contributions in their local area, while Tim Rich received the 'Outstanding Contribution to British and Irish Botany' Award for his long-standing contributions in the areas of field ID skills, BSBI Handbooks, contributions to scientific journals, research and his high-profile media appearances.

Access to the network of 91 expert Referees for 185 difficult-to-identify plant groups is one of the benefits of membership; to make accessing Referees' contact details and guidance on collection of material more easily accessible for members, a searchable table was created on the members-only area of the BSBI website, which also includes reports on BSBI Forums (see below); notices for members on subjects such as Database access; information and links for BSBI members to claim discounts when purchasing selected botanical titles; digital copies of members-only periodicals such as *BSBI News* and the *Yearbook*; updates about BSBI Handbooks; and details of the BSBI archive, stored in Harrogate, which holds physical copies of important BSBI publications.

Website

BSBI's comprehensive website, 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 regularly 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 400 webpages and a separate digital archive of botanical publications.

New web pages were created during the period under review to share details of job vacancies in BSBI and to advertise volunteering opportunities, including vacancies on standing committees; new county pages were created for Co. Armagh and Westmeath (all vice-counties in England, Scotland and Wales already have county pages, and work is ongoing to liaise with County Recorders in Ireland with the aim of a county page for every vice-county in Ireland).

A page now hosts multiple species accounts prepared by Dr Ralph Forbes, County Recorder for Co. Fermanagh, to support the *Flora of Fermanagh* and provide a valuable resource for the wider botanical community; a page was created offering guidance on taking photographs of plants to maximise the chances of a correct identification; and there is now a page setting out BSBI's commitment to the environment through responsible investing.

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Resources such as these are helping to raise the Society's profile, clarify our objectives and practices and 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 1,190,184 pageviews by 298,743 users.

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. The Plant Atlas website, externally-hosted but accessible via links on the BSBI homepage and drop-down menu, attracted more than 9,000 views in the first few weeks following the high-profile launch and attendant media coverage but has gone on to attract a huge number of views (686,872) since then.

Bringing FISCs in-house, and the related appointment of a dedicated Training Coordinator (see above), have presumably impacted the surge in visits to the FISC page. The training courses landing page dropped out of the Top 5: it attracted 14,461 pageviews in 2022/23 but only 11,689 during the period under review, although this is likely to be due to the content being split into two new pages listing internal and external provision (reflecting bringing FISC and Identiplant in-house) and also to the increase in views to other pages. See the table below:

Webpage Views 2023/24 vs 2022/23 (see Note)				
Rank	Webpage	Views 2023/24	Views 2022/23	% Increase/ (Decrease)
1	Maps bsbi.org/maps	186,634	104,774	+78%
2	Homepage bsbi.org/	67,122	37,591	+ 78%
3	New Year Plant Hunt bsbi.org/new-year-plant-hunt	19,125	8,516	+125%
4	Field Identification Skills Certificates (FISC) bsbi.org/field-skills	17,834	9,234	+93%
5	Field Meetings and Indoor Events /field-meetings-and-indoor-events	14,986	6,865	+118%
	Total	305,701	166,980	+83%

Note – Webpage Views data is collected using Google GA4 Analytics. Last year, 2022/23 data was collected using an older version of Google Analytics and has now been updated using this new collection method.

Outreach and engagement

BSBI members, staff and volunteers continued to present lectures to the public, support conservation and outreach projects both locally and nationally, and provide advice and guidance to national bodies and agencies.

Members in Wales attended an event organised by the Museum of Wales at which BSBI Countries Manager James Harding-Morris gave a presentation about Plant Atlas 2020 and there was a stand displaying BSBI literature. The Committee for Wales also submitted a response to the Welsh government's consultation on the proposed Sustainable Farming Scheme in Wales which is intended to replace the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) System of Support.

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Members in Scotland contributed to five national consultations during the year under review: they supported a BSBI objection to Highland Council for creation of a golf course at Coul Links; responded to consultations proposals from Forestry & Land Scotland and Historic Environment Scotland with potential to impact nationally important plant populations at Angus Glens and Holyrood Park; and responded to consultations on Future Grant Support for Forestry, led by Scottish Forestry, and Tackling the Nature Emergency, led by the Scottish Government. Following the successful Scotland launch of *Plant Atlas 2020* at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh in March 2023, BSBI was invited to make a presentation about the importance of Atlas key findings to Ministers, Members of the Scottish Parliament and their staff from all five major parties. The presentation in December 2023 received an encouraging and knowledgeable reception, and an associated parliamentary motion received cross-party support.

A new initiative was launched in Scotland aimed at making information about wild plants more easily available to the wider public. Under the working title "Wild Plants on the Scottish Tourist Trail", the objective is to create online 'leaflets' describing plants that can be seen when visiting tourist sites. A pro forma for such leaflets was created, made available on the BSBI website, and contributions are being sought.

Reaching out to the next generation of botanists, BSBI material was included in the delegate packs of plant science students attending the Gatsby Plant Summer School. BSBI staff members also attended the 2023 Botanical University Challenge (BUC) competition and Student Botany Festival, held over two days in July at University of Nottingham and aimed at plant science students. We had a stand displaying BSBI material and demonstrating *Plant Atlas 2020*; contributed to panel discussions, Q&A sessions, and a careers workshop; and led a guided walk on campus where teams of students competed to record as many plant species as possible. All 37 finalists, quarter-finalists and semi-finalists in the BUC competition were given a one-year digital/ student membership of BSBI as a prize and were encouraged to access BSBI resources and attend events such as the British & Irish Botanical Conference.

Media Coverage

The Society continued to build links and strengthen relationships with print and broadcast media throughout the year under review; this included building up new relationships at regional and local level, by publicising county-level finds of eye-catching plants, as well as strengthening ongoing relationships with national media contacts and contributing to prestigious scientific journals.

Media coverage of *Plant Atlas 2020*, launched to great acclaim in the media in March 2023, continued during the period under review, with articles in the newsletters and on the websites of organisations such as the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, National Museums of Northern Ireland, the Biological Records Centre, the National Biodiversity Network and the National Federation of Biological Recording. A glowing review of *Plant Atlas 2020* by eminent natural history author Peter Marren was published in *British Wildlife* magazine and an article on wildflowers, with in-depth coverage of the Atlas, appeared in *Resurgence & Ecologist*. Dr Gemma Harper, Chief Executive Officer of the Joint Nature Conservancy Council, discussed *Plant Atlas 2020* findings in an in-depth interview published in *Civil Service World*.

References to *Plant Atlas 2020* key findings, and to the contribution of the Society's botanical recorders, appeared across the media throughout 2023/24, including in an article on Japanese Knotweed in *The Guardian*; a report on the BBC website about the creation of a new wildflower meadow in the West Midlands; international coverage in *Le Figaro*; and mentions in local newspapers such as *The Worcester Observer*, *Lynn News* (East Anglia), *East Lothian Courier*, *Yorkshire Bylines* and the *Salisbury & Avon Gazette*, and on websites such as *Workers Liberty*, *Nature World News* and *The Echo* (Cork), thereby spreading the *Plant Atlas 2020* key messages to a wide and diverse range of audiences.

The Society's staff and officers also engaged with target audiences via other high-profile and specialist media platforms: BSBI Countries Manager James Harding-Morris appeared on BBC Countryfile in May 2023 in a feature about the wild flower meadow at the farm of presenter Adam Henson, while Dr Kevin Walker, BSBI Head of Science, co-authored a paper published in the prestigious scientific journal *Nature*, about '*Anthropogenic climate and land-use change drive short- and long-term biodiversity shifts*

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across taxa' and also published an article about wildflower seed sowing in the Countryside Land Management magazine. An article about the newly-created Scotland Identiplant hub, by BSBI Training Coordinator Dr Chantal Helm, was published in the network bulletin of The Conservation Volunteers, thereby spreading the word about this important online plant identification course (see above) which has recently been brought in-house.

BSBI has increasingly become the first port of call for print and broadcast media covering stories involving wild plants: BSBI distribution maps were used in articles about Giant Hogweed in *The Independent*, the *Liverpool Echo* and on the GB News website; *Horticulture Week* cited BSBI data in a report aimed at finding out 'What is Britain's most successful wild plant?'; Bridget Keehan, BSBI Ireland Officer, contributed to an article about ragwort in the *Irish Independent* and was interviewed by UCB Radio about Giant Hogweed; Dr Fred Rumsey, one of BSBI's expert referees, contributed to an article in the *Daily Mail* about bluebells and helped *BBC Winterwatch* shoot footage in Devon about fern life-cycles, while Dr Helena Crouch, BSBI trustee and County Recorder, was interviewed for a regional BBC report on the spread of Himalayan Balsam in Somerset.

Research on altitudinal records for eleven tree species, building on BSBI data and carried out by Sarah Watts, a key member of BSBI's Committee for Scotland, led to a paper in *British & Irish Botany* which was then picked up by Scottish media. Sarah was interviewed on BBC Scotland TV and radio, appeared on the BBC Scotland and National Trust for Scotland websites as well as several local websites and newspapers; in every interview and on social media, Sarah highlighted the importance of BSBI's altitudinal data which underpinned her research.

Several BSBI County Recorders featured in periodicals, including Phoebe O'Brien (Co. Clare), who was quoted in an article in the *Irish Examiner* about fake lawns; Rory Hodd (Co. Kerry) talked about the Kerry Mousetail Fern, also in the *Irish Examiner*; Steve Chambers (Ceredigion) was quoted in a report in the *Herald Wales* after having identified a mystery orchid at a nature reserve; *The Scotsman* and *Angus County World* both covered the story of David Elston (Kincardineshire) re-finding Small Adder's-tongue; and the Limerick Voice website featured an in-depth interview with young ecologist Oliver Lynch-Milner about his recent appointment as BSBI County Recorder for Co. Limerick and what the role entails.

The BBC website (northern Ireland page), the Irish Garden Plant Society website and the blog of high-profile environmental journalist Mark Avery all picked up on the find reported by BSBI member Jake Dalzell of Autumn Lady's-tresses in Northern Ireland; and several periodicals in the Republic of Ireland reported on events in the Society's annual programme: the *Irish Independent* reported on the proceedings at the Irish Spring Conference; and the *Irish Examiner* and the *Killarney Advertiser* both reported on the 4-day BSBI Summer Meeting in Co. Kerry.

The results of the New Year Plant Hunt featured on 'Mooney Goes Wild', Ireland's premier nature programme on RTE Radio 1, in the *Irish Examiner*, *Horticulture Week* and in local newspapers including the *Sidmouth Herald*, *Hampshire Chronicle* and *Western Morning News*, as well as on websites including Bird Guides, The Irish Gardener and Wild Essex. BSBI Ireland Officer Bridget Keehan also gave two interviews about the Hunt to local radio stations.

Finally, several projects in which BSBI is a partner were also featured in national media or scientific journals during the period under review: Plant Alert, the project run by BSBI in partnership with University of Coventry and aimed at discovering which garden plants have the potential to become invasive in future, was featured in The Telegraph and in *Country Living*; and a paper about the power of data from the National Plant Monitoring Scheme, in which the Society is a partner, for climate change impact monitoring, was published in the *Journal of Applied Ecology*.

The Society also continued to build its social media profile during the year under review. Following recent management changes at X (formerly Twitter and previously by far the Society's main social media platform) and a subsequent decline worldwide in use of this platform, BSBI launched accounts

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on three other platforms - Threads, Bluesky and TikTok – and posted more frequently on our LinkedIn page. BSBI staff, officers and volunteer members continued to offer plant identification support to the wider public across these platforms, particularly on a weekly basis under the #wildflowerhour banner.

	Social media followers as at 31 March (000's)		
	2024	2023	% Increase
Facebook (Britain)	13.0	11.5	+13%
Facebook (Ireland)	3.5	3.3	+6%
Twitter	43.0	41.5	+4%
Instagram	10.0	8.9	+12%
Total	69.6	65.2	+7%

Income Diversification

In order to operate sustainably, and to encourage participation and support for our core goals from beyond the Society, BSBI extends its income from membership with grants and donations from a range of other sources. Income generation is directed through the Income Diversification Strategy, developed by the Fundraising & Engagement Manager, the most recent review of which was carried out in 2023. This strategy aims to keep BSBI's income at a level to support its strategic work, and from 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.

Strategic Plan

During 2023/24, we reviewed progress against BSBI's Strategic Plan for 2021-24 and developed a new plan with priorities for our work in the next three years. The sections above show how we have worked to deliver our three goals: building the community of botanists to sustain and develop the skills base; providing high quality, impartial data and interpretation for research and to help address biodiversity loss and climate change science; and disseminating information to drive a passion for plants.

Foundations

We have also continued to take steps to build resilience and strengthen our five foundations. Some key steps include:

Foundation 1: Strong relationships and brand

BSBI is committed to working with others who share our Vision to create the change we collectively seek. Plant Atlas 2020 has hugely raised BSBI's profile, resulting in new partnerships this year harnessing the underlying data in Heatmaps to aid land use decision making and Red Lists for conservation prioritisation. We continue to put in place stronger and longer-term partnership arrangements with statutory agencies (a key resilience indicator in the Strategy) and were pleased to receive funding from Welsh Government's Nature Network fund for a 2-year project on rare plants in Wales, as well as funding from Natural England for a new pilot local engagement project (see above).

We have further developed data sharing relationships, putting in place new agreements with Forest and Land Scotland and National Botanic Gardens Glasnevin (Ireland) to provide extracts from, or access to, data from the BSBI Plant Distribution Database (DDb) for research and conservation. We have also further developed our training and engagement partnerships, for example working with The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) to establish a Scotland hub for our Identiplant training course, working with CIEEM on joint guidance on our FISC botanical skills assessments and working with National Museums Northern Ireland on a programme of joint outreach.

Foundation 2: Strong governance

During the year under review, as well as refreshing our strategy for the next three years, we developed and consulted on a new Governance Handbook including role descriptions, committee terms of reference and procedures to improve succession planning including trustee induction plans. The new Handbook addresses all the remaining recommendations from the Governance Plan developed for BSBI by Bayes Business School in 2020-2021 and helps us to ensure we maintain high standards of governance and comply with the Charity Governance Code. We advertised trustee roles widely, which enabled us to recruit three new trustees with botanical, financial and marketing experience, and introduced new trustee induction sessions.

With the changeover in the Hon. Gen. Secretary role, we moved our Registered Office to WMT LLP's St. Albans premises and engaged WMT to assist with statutory returns. Trustees took on more active committee liaison roles. To continue to explore what members need from the Society, we held two Forum meetings, one in April 2023 to consider support for County Recorders (see below) and a cohesive events programme and in February 2024 to consult on our new Strategy and a review of our Nature Conservation Policy.

We also applied to register as a charity in Ireland and received feedback that some changes are required to our Articles of Association (Constitution) to meet charity law in Ireland. In the year ahead, we will be checking these changes with our other regulators (Charity Commission for England and Wales and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator) before putting proposals for revised Articles to members for agreement.

Foundation 3: Effective data management systems

We published our Data Management plan and recruited a Data Support Officer to increase capacity to implement our priority data work alongside the Database Officer. For more information see Goal 2 above.

Foundation 4: Sustainable Business Model

BSBI has been through a lot of change and growth recently. In the past two years we have taken on six new staff (four new roles and two replacing retiring staff members), diversified our income streams further and increased our turnover. This increase in income led to our first Statutory Audit for the year ended 31 March 2023 and an audit is now taking place each year. With growth, the Finance Manager knows that BSBI's needs have become more sophisticated. Internal financial reporting continues to be adapted in response to changing needs and further appropriate financial controls have been designed and implemented; all increasingly important as BSBI grows and in order to protect against fraud. To build capacity for change, the Finance Manager has also explored options for efficiencies and a review of finance responsibilities led to trustees approving a proposal to invest in extra finance capacity. This was implemented in Summer 2024 and continues to be monitored and improved.

A review of the results of our Income Diversification Strategy (IDS) 2020-2023 (summarised above) showed that we have a healthy diversity in our income streams, good progress with growth in grants, appeals and sponsorship alongside excellent membership growth and some promising signs for the future including new statutory income and new major donors. We have also seen steady growth in the return on investment in fundraising. Our IDS for the 2024-2027 Strategy period builds on this work in developing BSBI's income streams and encouraging sustainable growth, while continuing to aim for a model that operates at a surplus, thereby minimising the need to rely on reserves. Trustees continue to use our Strategy Decision Making criteria to inform decisions on our work and consider these in the review of staff roles (see next section).

Foundation 5: Passionate, skilled staff and volunteers

At our April 2023 Forum meeting we discussed how we can best support our County Recorders. This led to valuable insights into the challenges, successes and varied nature of these vital roles. Key themes from the discussion were the need for succession planning and guidance on taking a team approach to the role, as well as exploring new ways to motivate and maintain engagement through training, support, recognition for achievements and by offering networking opportunities to build, connect and share knowledge. The reports under Goals 1 and 2 above show some of the work we have done towards addressing these needs.

We have also reviewed our support capacity, following the development of our new Science Strategy. Trustees reviewed roles in the Science & Data and Countries Support teams to ensure we have the right roles in place to meet the needs of the recording community and our science ambitions. This resulted in the decision to make the Countries Support Manager role permanent and from April 2024 to separate the Scientific and England Officer role into two separate roles: Scientific Officer, focusing on leading science projects and a new England Officer role, to deliver a one-year pilot project funded by Natural England to increase support for County Recorders in England and overcome barriers to recording, data flow and mobilisation of data. Trustees also considered an annual review of Identiplant and FISC and agreed to increase the hours of the Training Coordinator role to continue to grow Identiplant and FISC provision.

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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

Also, see:

www.plantatlas2020.org
www.BritishAndIrishBotany.org
www.PlantAlert.org
www.identiplant.bsbi.org



<https://x.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 consistently 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 & Engagement Manager, to oversee its fundraising, and it 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, developed in 2020 under the guidance of The Foundation for Social Improvement (FSI) and extended until 2027 in December 2023. 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 & Engagement Manager and others.

Fundraising is an organisational priority within BSBI which 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) 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; all donations are included, 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 $RoI = 1.5$

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, £3.80 (2023: £2.34) of income has been generated, so a significantly improved RoI of 3.80 (2023: 2.34).

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Trustees are delighted with this large improvement versus the previous year however they urge a note of caution about expectations for the future because the year to March 2024 saw receipt of a single, unusually large, donation of £120,000 which drove up the RoI as described. Other than for this donation, RoI would have been 2.09; comparable to 2023. This donation is talked about later, in the Income section of the Financial Review.

Looking ahead, Trustees will continue to guide and monitor BSBI's fundraising activities whilst working towards the a stable & recurring 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 & Engagement 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

For the year under review, the Board of Trustees is delighted to report Total Income for the year of £818k (2023: £538k) a 52% increase vs 2023. Net Income is £174k (2023: Net Expenditure -£154k); an Operating Surplus of £121k plus investment gains £53k (2023: Operating Deficit -£84k plus investment losses -£70k)

Looking further within these numbers, the Operating Surplus on the Unrestricted General Fund (BSBI's continuing operations) is £120k for 2024 (2023: -£27k Operating Deficit), well ahead of the break-even Budget set by the Board in March 2023 and the reasons for this variance are set out in the Income section below. BSBI continues its journey of progress towards delivering the Society's operations in a financially sustainable manner as illustrated below:

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Operating Surplus (Deficit) on the General Fund £000 *	120*	(27)	3	(15)	(25)	(33)	(61)	(146)

*This, together with the deficit of (£28k) on the Unrestricted Strategic Development Reserve, £29k surpluses on Restricted Reserves, altogether comprise the total net Operating Surplus of £121k as per the SOFA.

Economic & Political Backdrop

The UK economy in 2023/24 has been shaped by a mix of challenges and recovery efforts following the economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit adjustments, and subsequent geopolitical events, including the war in Ukraine.

Consumer confidence has been weak, affected by high inflation, rising interest rates and economic uncertainty. UK Base Rate peaked at 5.25% in August 2023 & remained so for a full year until the Bank of England's decision to reduce it to 5% in August 2024.

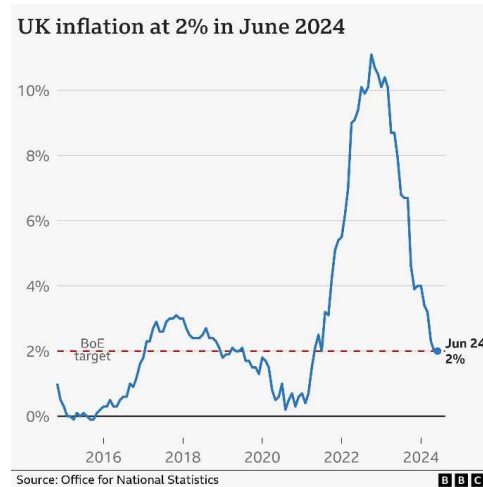
Despite some Government interventions to ease the cost-of-living crisis, many households have faced financial pressure, which has dampened consumer spending.

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The UK economy in 2023/24 has therefore been navigating through a complex mix of legacy issues along with new challenges posed by high inflation and global instability. The new Labour Government's Economic Policy must now remain focused on keeping inflation low & stable (currently 2%) while trying to support growth and a transition to a more sustainable and resilient economy.



It is against this economic and political backdrop that we report.

Investments and Cash

Total Return on investments (net gains/losses, plus investment income) was £64,351 (2023: -£56,636).

RBC Brewin Dolphin (RBCBD) is BSBI's investment manager and, under its guidance, the BSBI Board continues to operate an ethical investment stance aligned with its charitable aims, designed to have limited exposure to organisations engaged in the fossil fuel industry.

In 2024, BSBI's investment portfolio benefited from strong performance in North American equities, specifically in the Information Technology sector. This sector had a phenomenal year, delivering Total Return of +53.7% resulting from a surge in interest in Artificial Intelligence (AI) & in "the magnificent 7" Apple, Alphabet (Google's parent), Amazon, Meta (which owns Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Threads), Microsoft, Nvidia & Tesla.

Total Return of BSBI's investment portfolio this year (net of fees) & a comparison to other metrics:

BSBI's portfolio - this year	+9.6%
BSBI's portfolio - last year	- 8.3%
RBCBD Risk Category 6 (Benchmark)	+13.4%
RPI +2%	+6.4%

At year end, the Society had Net Assets of £1,008,868 (2023: £834,425); Fixed Asset Investments of £729,190 (2023: £694,839) and Net Current Assets of £279,678 (2023: £139,586).

BSBI held £401,293 Cash at bank at 31 March 2024 (2023: £276,029). This relatively high level of cash holdings is a continued 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 has proved sensible when managing the negative impacts of Covid and the war in Ukraine. £30,000 was withdrawn from the investment portfolio in the year, less than the £50,000 budgeted (2023: £NIL).

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Income

An important income milestone of half a million pounds was surpassed in 2023 and, in 2024, the Board is once again pleased to report further growth in income to £818,239 (2023: £538,427).

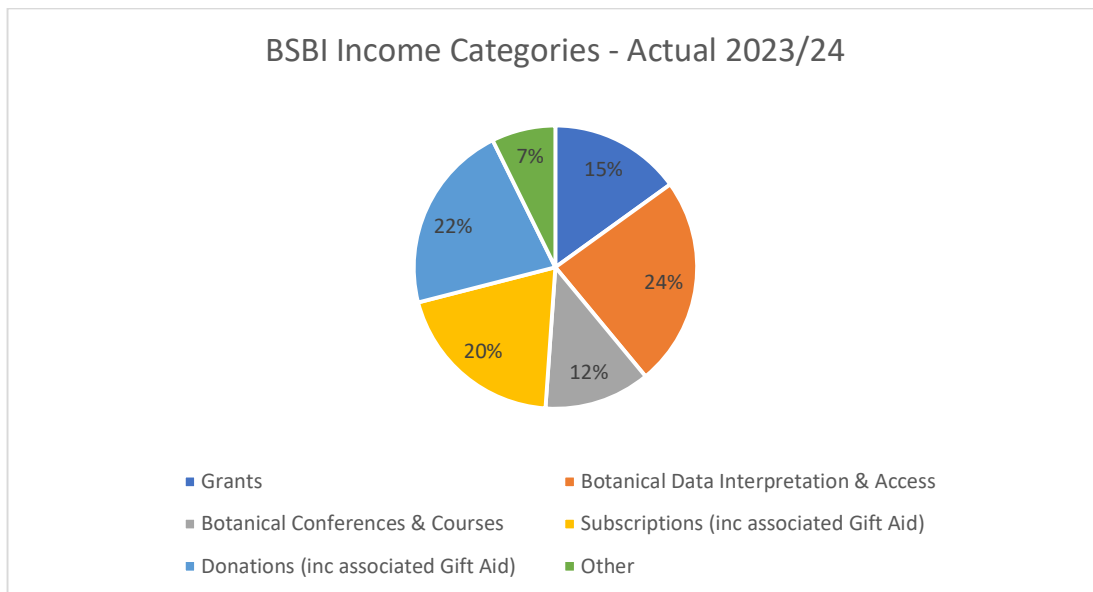
A visual illustration of BSBI's income categories and a comparison to the previous year follows overleaf.

One of the clearly visible highlights is the growth (from 6% to 12% of total income) in **Botanical Conferences and Courses** income, hugely boosted by the first year of income in 2023 from Identiplant and FISC training; generating £46k and £24k income respectively. Demand is even stronger in 2024 and capacity is being further expanded.

Trustees would also like to draw attention to the large growth in **Donations** from £73k in 2023 (14% income) to £177k in 2024 (22% income) which includes a single, unusually large, donation of £120k, from an individual who asked to remain anonymous. Aside from £3k of this being gifted and restricted to a specific project, the remaining £117k was given on an unrestricted basis, to be used at the discretion of BSBI. This huge generosity and flexibility have allowed BSBI to plan ahead with greater financial security and confidence, and for that, Trustees are enormously grateful. Options for this money were drawn up & discussed at BSBI's September 2023 Board meeting. Trustees decided to allocate the money to strategic work to support the recording community and data management, in three ways through to 2027:

- 1) Countries Support - to partially fund the Countries Manager role, central to BSBI's work to support the recorder community across Britain and Ireland
- 2) Scotland Project – to match fund BSBI's wide activities supporting recording in Scotland for the next few years
- 3) Data Development Plan - to support this important project to improve data management and user support, including the development of the new BSBI Recording App, through partial funding of the Data Support Officer's role

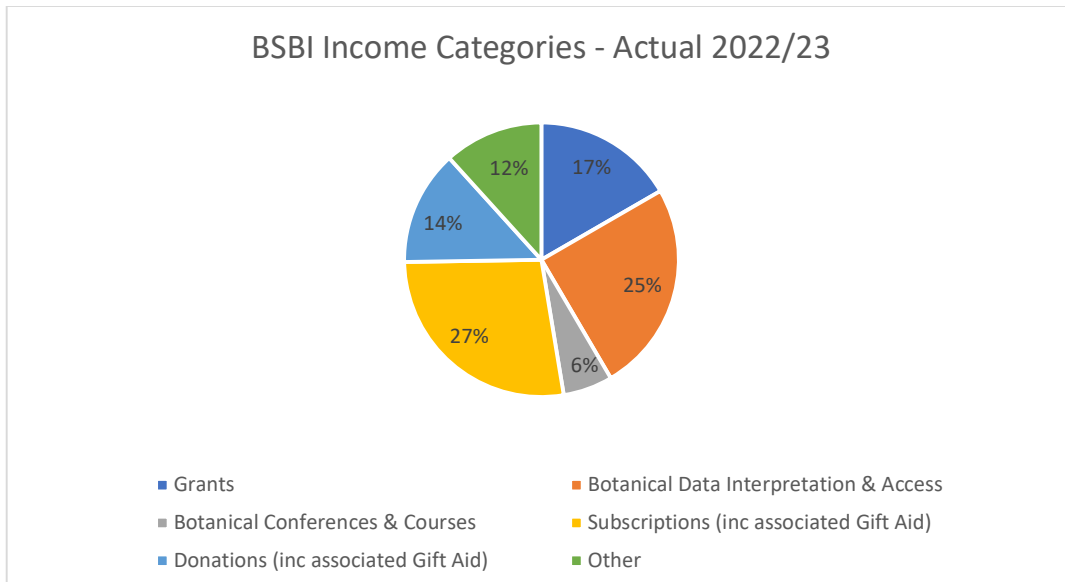
For future visibility and to demonstrate the importance of delivering these plans, Trustees took the additional step of designating the full £117k to the Strategic Development Fund, visible at Note 14.



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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*. 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.

Although a slightly smaller % of total income (20% vs 27%), **Subscriptions (including associated Gift Aid)** experienced yet another year of strong growth; +10% to £163k. We were pleased to hold Membership subscription rates unchanged for calendar year 2024 so this increase is largely a product of a +6% growth in membership numbers. The 1 January 2023 subscription rate increase, effective for only the last 3 months of 2022/23 made up the remainder of the +10% increase.

We have measured the **Membership Retention KPI %** (% of members choosing to remain members throughout the year) for five years now and we are delighted that this has edged up 91% in the year; its highest recorded level so far (2023: 88%). The stability of this KPI, alongside another good year of membership growth, reinforces that members continue to enjoy and value all that BSBI offers.

Although the % of income generated by **Grants** decreased slightly from 17% to 15% of income, this belies a growth from £89k to £123k. Grants continue to be an important source of income and, this year, we are pleased that DAERA has joined our roster of statutory funders and we are now helping to support botanical priorities in Northern Ireland. 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 £196k (2023: £134k) and we are pleased to help the organisations achieve their aims through our work. This continues to include Natural England (NE), who funded partnership work with BSBI to further improve the accessibility and mobilisation of BSBI plant data for those making evidence-based decisions (including via Botanical Heatmaps, UK Species Inventory update and Plant Atlas 2020 England trends assessment, as mentioned in our Activities report under Goal 2 above). 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. BSBI has also continued to work with the Environment Agency and with UKCEH under a three-year contract to deliver information re non-native plant species and to provide data access to a range of conservation and land management organisations including, National Trust, Plantlife, Royal Botanic Garden Kew, National

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Botanic Gardens Glasnevin, RSPB and National Trust Scotland, as well as a number of universities, institutes and other organisations to undertake scientific research on a diverse 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 – as explained earlier – to sponsorships, grants, for attending events, towards BSBI’s key projects, as part of fundraising drives and through 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 Big Give Trust
Britford Bridge Charitable Trust
Lynne Farrell
Greenwings Wildlife Holidays
Habitat Aid
National Lottery Heritage Fund
The Owen Family Trust
The Reed Foundation
Josh Styles

The Society 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; This category of income experienced a drop from 12% to 7% in 2024 because of the impact of £24k royalties and journal support received in 2023 on the launch of BSBI’s *Plant Atlas 2020: Mapping Changes in the Distribution of the British and Irish Flora*. Royalties are now received at a more modest, ongoing level.

Expenditure

Unrestricted Fund expenditure increased by +11% (2023: +24%) in the year to £661,821 (2023 £595,931) and a few notable highlights are covered below.

At £137,831 (2023: £95,406), **Expenditure on Raising Funds** now includes Direct costs of member publications (eg. BSBI News) to sit with the Staff Costs of Membership already reported here. These costs of £39,907 were previously included within **Expenditure on Charitable Activities; Botanical Publications** (2023 - £38,058). This change improves transparency as all Membership costs are now visible in this single place. We are also very pleased to report that 33% (2023: 25%) of members have chosen the digital membership format (previously called paperless membership) which has allowed us to harness worrying increases in paper costs in order to save valuable charitable funds and, importantly, reduce environmental impact.

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Expenditure on Charitable Activities is £559,230 (2023: £527,060) and +6%. This category has increased in line with Budget expectations. A large part of the increase is Direct Staff costs which reflects, for example, the salaries of employees directly engaged in increased income such as the DAERA grant, as explained earlier in this report. The salary cost of the Data Support Officer who was engaged to mitigate data management risks & began work in August 2023, is included here.

Other cost increases can be explained by changes in activities and / or scale during the year:

- **Conferences and Courses** is £42,895 (2023: £23,572) this increase largely reflects the payment of Identiplant tutors, in its first year in 2023/24.
- Similarly, **Botanical Conferences, Courses & Education Staff Costs** of £25,431 (2023: £3,181) reflect the first year of delivering Identiplant & FISC by the Training Co-ordinator
- **BSBI News and other similar publications** is £NIL in 2024 (2023; £38,058), these costs of member publications having been relocated to **Expenditure on Raising Funds**, as explained earlier.
- **Cost of Publication sales** of £7,314 (2023: £42,873) is correlated to a reduction in Royalty income. 2023 included £33k; a one-off contractual cost paid to Princeton University Press on the launch of the Plant Atlas 2020 publication.
- **Audit fees** £9,750 (2023: £9,000); this is the second year BSBI has been subject to Statutory audit

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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 was clearer than ever in 2023 when many hundreds of members' recording efforts, under the guidance of County Recorders, over many years, 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. The Board was therefore pleased to have made considerable steps forward last year in designing a recording methodology and the results for the year are now set out below. The results are largely unchanged vs the previous year.

- **20+ types of volunteering exist (2022/23: 20+)**
- **Just under 11,000 days volunteered (2022/23: just over 11,000)**

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 2023/24 are valued at a vast £1.6m (2023: £1.7m)**

The Board continues to be 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 continue to make BSBI the vibrant and energetic organisation it is today.

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

Last year, we mentioned here the UK Government's *Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill*, designed to tackle economic & social disparities. We are pleased this Bill was passed & the Act of Parliament received Royal Assent and became law in October 2023. 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 already developed to capture volunteered time will continue to be refined, deepening BSBI's understanding and leading to offering more opportunities to inspire volunteers of the future.

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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. The Board governs all of BSBI's activities and is assisted on a day-to-day basis by the Chief Executive. They together coordinate 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 (21 November 2024) 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 2024 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
Dr CM Cheffings	Appointed 24 Nov 2014, retired 16 Nov 2023
Dr S Knapp OBE	Appointed 25 Nov 2017
Mr AD Thomas OBE	Appointed 25 Nov 2017, retired 16 May 2024
Dr S Gater	Appointed 4 Dec 2019, retired 16 Nov 2023
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
Dr T Dines	Appointed 16 Nov 2023
Mr RJ Allanach	Appointed 6 Jan 2024
Mrs K Nicola J Tainton	Appointed 19 Jan 2024

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 and other regulator 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. In this period, BSBI developed and consulted on a new Governance Handbook (see Strategic Plan, Good Governance above)

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Honorary Officers

The principal honorary officers of the Society are the President, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the Honorary General Secretary and the Honorary Company Secretary. They are assisted by three staff members: Chief Executive, Head of Science and Finance Manager, all of whom attend every Board meeting in order to do so. Other staff members attend as and when the need arises.

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 2024*.

The Staff

As at 31 March 2024 the Society employed 14 staff (2023: 12), equivalent to 12 full time posts (2023: 9), to work with the principal honorary office bearers in coordinating, interpreting and supporting the work of its members 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
- Membership, Engagement & Communications
- Finance

The relatively new Countries Team underwent further changes during the year, with one departure and two new joiners:

- Trustees took the important decision in December 2023 to convert James Harding-Morris' role as Countries Manager; leading and coordinating BSBI's work to support and build the community of botanists across Britain and Ireland, into a permanent position.
- Paul Green, BSBI's Ireland Officer retired in July 2023 and Trustees thank him for all he has contributed to BSBI's activities through this and other roles over the years.
- Trustees welcomed Bridget Keehan as she stepped into the Ireland Officer role in June 2023 and Jen Farrar into the new role of Botanical Skills Officer, Northern Ireland, in October 2023, each being responsible for promoting botany and BSBI's aims in their respective countries.

Committees

The *BSBI Yearbook 2024* 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 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.

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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. 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 assembling 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** 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.

The Society's Finance Committee 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.

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).

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 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*. CC14 reflects the August 2023, in response to the 2022 *Butler-Sloss* High Court case which 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 2024, RBCBD reported in person to BSBI's Finance Committee that BSBI's investment portfolio has:

- (1) Just under half (2023: half) of the underlying benchmark exposure to companies involved in fossil fuels, based on revenues
- (2) 91.5% (2023: 89%) of the underlying investments held within collective funds have an ESG risk rating of medium or lower.
- (3) 0% (2023: 0%) exposure to companies with over 10% or more of revenues involved in the production and/or distribution of palm oil
- (4) 0.1% (2023: 0.1%) exposure to companies with 10% or more of revenues involved in growing genetically modified (GM) crops or the development and/or cultivation of GM seeds & plants

RBCBD is firmly committed to stewardship; ensuring the responsible ownership of assets. It continues to engage with funds to improve climate change reporting and to support investment into renewable infrastructure. Through its partner, Columbia Threadneedle, it also has numerous engagements with leading corporations around protecting and setting biodiversity targets.

RBCBD has also recently joined the largest biodiversity engagement collaboration: www.Natureaction100.org to partner & drive positive change.

Nature Action 100



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

All of this work aims to create long term value leading to sustainable benefits for the environment and society and, through these actions and monitoring, BSBI feels reassured its investment activities promote the health and protection of the natural environment.

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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. 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.
- 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 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 56 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 have been addressing this risk by strengthening BSBI's resources; James Drever was recruited into the new role of Data Support Officer in August 2023, now working 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. More recently, work on cloud storage has been taken forward and Data Recovery Planning will be discussed at the next Data Plan Steering meeting.

2) Key roles unfilled when current post holders step down

Risk: Lack of a continuity plan for succession of Trustee, Chairs, Secretaries and Vice County Recorders (VCRs). The risks of this are that BSBI's responsibilities may not be carried out: administration, legal obligations, areas of governance, financial responsibilities resulting in financial or other penalties. Where a VCR role becomes vacant, there is a loss of botanical leadership, knowledge & experience for that geographical area.

Mitigation: Trustees are addressing this via a range of succession planning measures, all of which are embedded within the new BSBI Governance Handbook. Succession planning measures include review determining how key roles can be supported & thus workload shared, creating clear job descriptions for key roles and advertising for trustees and those key roles regularly and widely, clearly stating the skills and expertise sought, tracking progression through committees, knowledge sharing and training opportunities. For VCR vacancies, BSBI's Science & Data Committee is capturing the location & number of current & likely upcoming vacancies (eg. through retirement). Measures to fill these vacancies include compiling, sharing and regularly reviewing the list, inviting applications, describing the skills sought, emphasising the benefits of joint recorderships and VCR teams. This is alongside provision of support, training and networking opportunities, support with data management and providing a range of science projects for recorders to participate in (see Support for Recorders fund below).

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Reserves Policy

The Board last reviewed its Reserves Policy in June 2023 and the next review will take place in Autumn 2024. This Policy sets out why BSBI holds its particular level of reserves and how the Board seeks to ensure financial sustainability.

Over time, BSBI's income is becoming more diversified, with a more predictable core of income, thereby reducing overall risk in the face of one or more sources becoming vulnerable. This increasing robustness gives the comfort BSBI has sought through its *Income Diversification Strategy 2021-2023*.

In its Reserves Policy, the Board of Trustees has carefully reflected and concluded that £0.5m - an average of 9 months' 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 2024, unchanged from last year (2023: £0.7M). 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.

At this point, readers are asked to refer to Note 18 – Post Balance Sheet Events. A generous legacy was received after year end, which affords BSBI choices, a boost to reserves and financial security.

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 in June 2020 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.

With the final three of the below added in the year, has maintained seven Restricted Income Funds during the year under review, currently valued at £32,460 (2023: £3,468):

- 1) The **Presidents' Award Fund** provides for an annual award of £300 for outstanding contributions to botany.
- 2) The **Welsh Flora Fund** is normally for small ad hoc grants towards botanical publications relating to North Wales. There was no expenditure this year however, last year, £750 was met from this Fund; the North Wales proportion of the *Plant Atlas 2020* book launch costs.
- 3) The **Scottish Officer Fund** received income of £22,000 this year (2023: £20,000) 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.

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- 4) The **Scottish Training Programme** received donation income of £NIL (2023: £5,385 from The MacRobert Trust) 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. This Fund closed at the end of 2022/23.

- 5) **The Botanical Training Fund** was established in the year out of a successful fundraising campaign focused on expanding BSBI's Identiplant and FISC training into Ireland and Scotland. A generous grant from The Britford Bridge Trust, a sizeable legacy from the Estate of Liz Mc Donnell, together with donations and Gift Aid totalling £26,043 were received for these purposes, enabling £10,000 to be used towards the associated pay costs of BSBI's Training Co-ordinator. The fund is now invested to meet future expenditure in pursuit of its aims.

- 6) **The Support for Recorders Fund** is also a new fund in 2024, the four aims of which are to fund the work of BSBI staff to:
 - 1) Develop new and emergent Recorders through support, training and mentorship
 - 2) Provide training and trainer opportunities for all Recorders
 - 3) Ensure BSBI's software and database support Recorders' needs, and that there is training, physical equipment and help available for their use.
 - 4) Advance projects that make a meaningful contribution to botanical conservation through science and data collection

£12,874 was raised in 2024 for this Fund, comprising a generous legacy from the Estate of Clive Lovatt, donations and Gift Aid, all now invested, to meet future expenditure in 2024/25 & beyond.

- 7) The **Holy Grass Project Fund** was created by a £3,000 donation to meet the expenditure of a joint project between BSBI and Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) looking specifically at the genetics of *Hierochloe odorata* (Holy-grass) across its disjunct populations in Britain and Scandinavia. The expected £3,500 project costs are also funded by a BSBI Science & Research grant of £500.

6. Looking Ahead

As the publication of our *Plant Atlas 2020* demonstrated, in this time of biodiversity loss and a changing climate, our wild plants have never been more in need of the understanding, appreciation and support that BSBI is uniquely placed to provide. Our new strategic plan 2024-2027 sets out our priorities for the next three years to address this need.

We will continue to build a diverse community of botanists, share knowledge & foster a love of plants through field and indoor events, training, grants, publications, periodicals, communications, website, social media, outreach and membership. We will further expand provision of our Identiplant plant identification training & FISC skills assessments. We will develop clearer pathways to progress botanical skills, look for new solutions to overcome barriers to participation in botany and redesign our website.

Our new Science strategy will guide our work in providing high quality, impartial data and interpretation for research and to help address key environmental issues. We will continue to increase the number of records on the BSBI Distribution Database, improve ease of data entry via the new Recording app and provide more guidance and training for our data users.

We will continue to work in partnership to develop Botanical Heatmaps. These are an evidence-based tool which uses BSBI data 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, such as peatlands, that are so important for biodiversity and carbon storage. In the year ahead we will roll out use of Heatmaps in tree planting decision making in England, with Natural England (NE) and Forestry Commission; develop new Botanical Heatmaps for Scotland with Nature Scot (NS) and carry out a feasibility study of developing Heatmaps for the Republic of Ireland with National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

In partnership with NE and UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH) we will complete the GB Red list, which will provide an assessment of threat to plant species in Britain, based on internationally recognised International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) criteria. Red Lists are crucial in helping conservation organisations to prioritise and target conservation action.

We continue to support survey and recording and County Recorders in each country. Trustees are delighted to report we have been awarded funding from the Nature Networks Programme to run a Priority Plants on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in Wales project over the next two years. Our Wales Officer will work with our data and recorders in Wales to survey and assess the individual species plant features to improve evidence of their condition and guide future management. Our Countries Support Team will also continue to support recording efforts in England (funded by NE), in Ireland (funded by NPWS and including our Targeted Aquatic Plant Project), and in Scotland (funded by NS). In Northern Ireland we will continue to develop skills and evidence, funded by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs' (DAERA's) Northern Ireland Environment Fund.

We will continue to encourage participation in the New Year Plant Hunt across Britain and Ireland and the National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS) in the UK. We will also develop a new monthly Flower Hunt to provide evidence on how our flora is responding to the changing climate.

Our work to strengthen our foundations and resilience will also continue, with the publication of our Governance Handbook and further progression of our application to register with the Charities Regulator in Ireland, amongst other priorities.

In summary, in the year ahead, BSBI's members, the botanists recording wild plants, sharing their knowledge and fostering a love of plants and our science and data, will continue to 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.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2024

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	WMT LLP, 4 Beaconsfield Rd, St Albans, AL1 3RD
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 Flagstone Group Ltd, 26-27 Oxendon St, SW1Y 4EL.
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	Dr M Sheehy Skeffington
President Elect	Prof P Ashton (from 16 Nov 2023)
Honorary General Secretary	Dr S Gater (until 10 Jan 2024) Mr B O’Kane (from 10 Jan 2024)
Company Secretary	Dr S Gater (until 16 Nov 2023)
Chief Executive	Ms JC Hanmer
Head of Science	Dr KJ Walker
Finance Manager	Ms JE Etherington
Website	www.bsbi.org

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

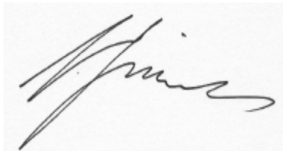
The Trustees confirm that so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information (as defined by section 418(3) of the Companies Act 2006) of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware. They have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as Trustees in order to make themselves 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 17th September 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Dr CJ Miles
Trustee & Chair of the Board



Miss KN Jones
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 2024

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2024 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 2024 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 2024

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 2024

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:

- 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

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 2024**

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.

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)

17 September 2024

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 2024

	Note	Unrestricted Funds 2024 £	Restricted Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2024 £	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2023 £
INCOME FROM							
Subscriptions, Donations, Grants & Legacies	2	409,392	63,917	473,309	284,852	25,385	310,237
Charitable activities	3	322,431	-	322,431	207,596	-	207,596
Investments	4	22,405	94	22,499	20,497	97	20,594
Total		754,228	64,011	818,239	512,945	25,482	538,427
EXPENDITURE ON							
Raising of funds	5	137,831	-	137,831	95,406	-	95,406
Charitable activities	6	523,990	35,240	559,230	500,525	26,535	527,060
Total		661,821	35,240	697,061	595,931	26,535	622,466
OPERATING (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS		92,407	28,771	121,178	(82,986)	(1,053)	(84,039)
OTHER RECOGNISED (LOSSES)/GAINS							
Realised (losses)/gains on investments	9	(8,869)	(37)	(8,906)	60,423	299	60,722
Unrealised (losses)/gains on investments	9	61,913	258	62,171	(129,755)	(642)	(130,397)
Total (losses)/gains on investments		53,044	221	53,265	(69,332)	(343)	(69,675)
NET (EXPENDITURE)/INCOME		145,451	28,992	174,443	(152,318)	(1,396)	(153,714)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS							
Total funds brought forward		830,957	3,468	834,425	983,275	4,864	988,139
Net movement in funds as above		145,451	28,992	174,443	(152,318)	(1,396)	(153,714)
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		976,408	32,460	1,008,868	830,957	3,468	834,425

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

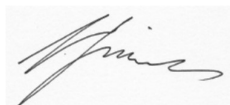
BALANCE SHEET

As at 31 March 2024

	Note	2024		2023	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets					
Investments	9		729,190		694,839
Current Assets					
Stocks	10	24,919		26,962	
Debtors	11	150,971		62,562	
Cash at bank		401,293		276,029	
			<hr/>		<hr/>
			577,183		365,553
Liabilities					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	12	297,505		225,967	
			<hr/>		<hr/>
Net Current Assets			279,678		139,586
			<hr/>		<hr/>
Net Assets			1,008,868		834,425
			<hr/>		<hr/>
Funds					
Restricted funds	13		32,460		3,468
Unrestricted funds	14				
General Fund			716,360		670,351
Strategic Development Fund			260,048		160,606
			<hr/>		<hr/>
			1,008,868		834,425
			<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 17th September 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Dr CJ Miles, Trustee &
Chair of the Board



Miss K N Jones, 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 2024

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	2024	2023
		£	£
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from (used in) operating activities	17	90,496	(51,205)
Cash generated from interest on deposits		4,768	782
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash generated from (used in) operating activities		95,264	(50,423)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Proceeds from sale of investments	9	30,000	-
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash provided by investing activities		30,000	-
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the year		125,264	(50,423)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		276,029	326,452
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		401,293	276,029
		<hr/>	<hr/>

Analysis of Changes in Net Debt

	At 1 April 2023 £	Cashflow £	At 31 March 2024 £
Cash at Bank	276,029	125,264	401,293

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 March 2024

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) (2nd 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 2024

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

Investment Income is recognised when earned, with dividends pending being accrued or prepaid.

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.

Expenditure on Raising Funds are those costs incurred in attracting income.

Expenditure on Charitable activities comprises 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 2024

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 2024

2. SUBSCRIPTIONS, DONATIONS, GRANTS & LEGACIES	2024	2023
	£	£
Membership Subscriptions (including associated Gift Aid)	162,700	147,426
Donations (including associated Gift Aid) and sundry income	131,044	47,503
Grants	113,166	89,632
Legacies	2,482	291
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Unrestricted Fund income	409,392	284,852
Membership Subscriptions (including associated Gift Aid)	-	-
Donations (including associated Gift Aid) and sundry income	46,417	25,385
Grants	10,000	-
Legacies	7,500	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Restricted Fund income	63,917	25,385
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	473,309	310,237
	<hr/>	<hr/>
3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES		
Botanical data interpretation & access and grant delivery	196,068	134,199
Botanical conferences, courses and education	99,109	31,368
Botanical publications	17,598	17,769
Royalties and journal support	9,656	24,260
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	322,431	207,596
	<hr/>	<hr/>
4. INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS		
Investment income (Restricted £94 (2023 - £97))	17,731	19,812
Bank deposit interest	4,768	782
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	22,499	20,594
	<hr/>	<hr/>
5. EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS		
Staff Costs of Membership & Communications (see Note)	45,480	42,664
Direct Costs of Member publications (see Note)	39,907	-
Staff Costs of Fundraising for Donations, Grants & Legacies	38,046	40,370
Other fundraising costs	727	280
Publicity	1,896	2,052
Investment management costs & finance charges	11,775	10,040
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	137,831	95,406
	<hr/>	<hr/>

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

Note – From 2024, **Expenditure on Raising Funds** includes Direct costs of member publications (eg. BSBI News) to sit with the Staff Costs of Membership already reported here. These costs of £39,907 were previously included within Expenditure on Charitable Activities; Botanical Publications (2023 - £38,058). This improves transparency as all Membership costs are now visible in this single place.

This cost grouping also reflects BSBI's structure whereby the Membership & Communications Team of three looks after managing the membership database, communicating with BSBI's members, whether via BSBI News, e-newsletters, BSBI's website or social media channels about subscriptions, joining BSBI, telling members about educational training, conferences, courses and handbooks and generally ensuring members' needs are met. The same team fundraises for donations, grants & legacies.

6. EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	2024	2023
	£	£
Botanical Data Interpretation & Access and Grant Delivery		
Direct Staff & Other Costs (Restricted £25,000 (2023 £25,385))	322,406	247,516
Support Staff & Other Costs	54,756	60,002
Grants awarded for scientific work (Restricted £240 (2023 £400))	<u>1,844</u>	<u>2,900</u>
	<u>379,006</u>	<u>310,418</u>
Botanical Conferences, Courses and Education		
Conferences and courses	42,895	23,572
Staff costs (Restricted £10,000 (2023 £NIL))	25,431	3,181
Grants awarded for training and education	<u>4,984</u>	<u>8,072</u>
	<u>73,310</u>	<u>34,825</u>
Botanical Publications and Plant Data (see note a)		
<i>BSBI News</i> and other similar publications (See Note 5)	-	38,058
Cost of publication sales	7,314	42,873
Grants awarded for botanical publications	<u>2,500</u>	<u>2,000</u>
	<u>9,814</u>	<u>82,931</u>
Governance		
Strategy Implementation Costs (Restricted £NIL (2023 £750))	851	17,542
Trustee indemnity insurance	1,117	838
Staff Costs	63,954	54,717
Audit fees	9,750	9,000
Professional & HR advice, Payroll & accounting platforms (See note b)	5,664	6,310
Committee costs and expenses	2,387	696
Increase / (decrease) in accrued holiday pay	848	504
Recruitment, Training & other governance costs	<u>12,529</u>	<u>9,279</u>
	<u>97,100</u>	<u>98,886</u>
Total (Restricted £35,240 (2023 £21,150))	<u>559,230</u>	<u>527,060</u>

Note a from 2024, the category previously known as Plant Data Management Staff Costs has been relocated to Botanical Data Interpretation & Access and Grant Delivery, Direct Staff & Other Costs
Note b includes fees of £1,910 (2023: £3,854) 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. Identiplant training grants are also given to a small number of students to cover the study cost, currently at £250 (see Note 16)
 - 3) **Grants for botanical publications,** normally up to £1,000 for county Floras written by BSBI members.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

In total, 22 individuals (2023: 24) were awarded grants in the year and the total value of grants disbursed in the year was £9,328 (2023: £10,872). The individual grants were awarded on the basis of applications made by individuals as described above. BSBI provided £NIL (2023: £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

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.

7. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Neither the Society's President, President Elect, nor Trustees received remuneration from BSBI 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.

In addition to giving time to BSBI to fulfil their various roles, Trustees also gave donations totalling £698 (2023: £118) to BSBI during the year, either personally or through their companies.

The following transactions took place during the year:

Amounts totalling £837 (2023: £483) were reimbursed to 4 (2023: 4) trustees who made expense claims for reimbursement of out-of-pocket travel, subsistence and other costs, of which, £94 (2023: £145) is outstanding at the year end.

Dr S Gater, Trustee until 16th November 2023, began working as Identiplant tutor & hub co-ordinator for Durham Wildlife Trust (DWT) in Spring 2023. Dr Gater acted as Identiplant hub co-ordinator and tutor; co-ordinating delivery of Identiplant by DWT as a regional hub on behalf of BSBI & he claimed tutor fees from DWT. In 2024, BSBI received £900 (2023: £NIL) from DWT in respect of 18 students; £300 fees less £250 per student for tutor and hub co-ordination costs.

Dr CM Cheffings, Trustee until 16th November 2023, is employed as Ecosystem Analysis Team Leader by Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). During the year, BSBI received contract income of £20,859 (2023: £20,483) directly from JNCC under its National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS) contract and also £1,875 (2023: £9,225) indirectly, via Natural England, in 2023/24 to advise JNCC re Countryside Stewardship Plus and in 2022/23 to support JNCC in considering how species data can help with the design of Local Nature Recovery and Environmental Land Management Schemes. £10,692 of the above (2023: £NIL) was outstanding at year end.

Dr S Knapp, Trustee, is employed as Head of the Algae, Fungi and Plants Division by The Natural History Museum (NHM). During the year, NHM gave BSBI free meeting space at the Angela Marmont Centre for UK Nature, within the NHM, for two meetings; in September 2023 & in February 2024. The previous year; in November 2022, NHM supplied meeting room and lecture theatre facilities free of charge for BSBI's British & Irish Botany Conference.

Professor P Ashton, President Elect from 16 November 2023, is Professor of Botany with teaching and research responsibilities at Edge Hill University (EHU) in Lancashire. Also, Dr M Dean, Trustee, was employed as an Associate Tutor at (EHU) until August 2021 and continued to maintain an

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

informal relationship with the University until August 2023. BSBI provides EHU with access to its database in exchange for EHU resources such as e-journals.

Dr HJ Crouch, Trustee, was engaged in 2024 as a contractor to National Trust for 3 days' survey work. During the year, BSBI received £6,500 income (2023: £NIL) from National Trust in respect of data and other work to support its Conservation Strategy.

Mr AD Thomas, Trustee until 16 May 2024, Mr AD Thomas, Trustee, is Honorary Vice-President of Field Studies Council (FSC). During the year, BSBI paid FSC £9,995 (2023: £10,250) for the provision of accommodation, catering and meeting facilities for BSBI member and other events held at FSC field centres. BSBI also received £6,525 income (2023: £NIL) from FSC in respect of advertising space taken in BSBI News and FISC fees.

Miss KN Jones, Trustee, purchased botanical data services on behalf of Nassington Parish Environment Plan from which BSBI received income during the year of £NIL (2023: £129).

Dr T Dines, Trustee from 16th November 2023, was employed by Plantlife as a Botanical Expert until 2021. During the year, BSBI received £1,650 income (2023: £2,000) from Plantlife for access granted to BSBI's plant database. Dr Dines is also an author engaged under contract on by Bloomsbury Press, the book publisher's British Wildlife Collection. Bloomsbury has agreed to collaborate with and promote BSBI in its book "Harrap's Wildflowers, Second edition".

Prof Pete Hollingsworth, Trustee, is Director of Science and Deputy Keeper at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE). During the year, BSBI paid RBGE £5,208 for BSBI events held there (2023: £1,066). RBGE also provides free of charge services for other BSBI events and office facilities used by BSBI's Scotland Officer.

Dr M Long, Trustee, 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 £50,391 (2023: £40,752); the £ equivalent of Euro denominated grants, from NPWS for BSBI's Ireland Officer, for an Aquatic Plants Project and, in 2023, 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 £7,398 (2023: £6,879) were reimbursed to these employees for of travel, subsistence and other costs, of which, £1,222 (2023: £1,563) 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 £133,866 from NE (2023: £60,758*) for the collection, verification & sharing of vascular plant data in England and the interpretation of this data to facilitate delivery of NE's statutory duties. £55,424 (2023: £NIL) is outstanding at the year end. 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 £9,000 (2023: £12,750) from UKCEH during the year under a three-year contract to deliver information re non-native plant species, of which £5,400 (2023: £12,750) 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 2024

8. STAFF COSTS	2024	2023
	£	£
Salaries	448,697	349,322
Social Security costs	40,466	33,063
Pension costs	18,345	16,143
Increase / (decrease) in accrued holiday pay	848	504
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total staff costs	508,356	399,032
	<hr/>	<hr/>

No employee earned in excess of an annual equivalent of £60,000 during the year (2023: nil).

The average number of employees during the year was 13 (2023: 11). At the reporting date there were 14 employees (2023: 12) of which, one (2023: one) was 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 26% (2023: 31%) 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 (2023: £NIL).

9. INVESTMENTS	2024	2023
	£	£
At Market Value		
At the beginning of the year	694,839	751,475
Investment income retained	17,731	19,813
Investment management charges deducted	(6,645)	(6,774)
Transfers to bank current account	(30,000)	-
Realised (loss)/gain in the year	(8,906)	60,722
Unrealised (loss)/gain in the year	62,171	(130,397)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Market value at the end of the year	729,190	694,839
	<hr/>	<hr/>
At Original Cost	664,479	691,757
	<hr/>	<hr/>

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)****For the year ended 31 March 2024**

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	18.7%	19.6%
Equities - Overseas	49.6%	41.9%
Bonds	16.7%	14.1%
Global Investments	1.1%	6.8%
Property	2.7%	3.1%
Private Equity	2.6%	2.3%
Other	5.1%	8.2%
Cash	3.5%	4.0%
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	100.0%	100.0%
	<hr/>	<hr/>

10. STOCKS AND WORK IN PROGRESS

Botanical publications	24,919	26,962
	<hr/>	<hr/>

Stocks of publications are held by the Society's sales agent, Summerfield Books (2007) Ltd. Provision is made for slow-moving stocks; £4,883 (2023: £4,768). Sales proceeds are shown in note 3

11. DEBTORS

Debtors	75,222	16,904
Accrued income	46,492	40,743
Prepayments	29,257	4,915
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total debtors	150,971	62,562
	<hr/>	<hr/>

The increase in Debtors is almost entirely a timing difference; explained by a single customer paying a £55k debt a few days after 31 March 2024, whereas the same customer's similarly timed debt for the previous year was settled a few days before 31 March 2023.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

12. CREDITORS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year		
Creditors	9,759	12,810
Taxation and social security	37,548	26,907
Pensions	4,736	3,821
Holiday pay accrual	10,160	9,312
Other accrued expenses	18,545	17,468
Deferred income	216,757	155,649
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Creditors	297,505	225,967
	<hr/>	<hr/>

Deferred income of £102,520 (2023: £95,246) relates to subscriptions received for the calendar year 2024 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. £263,105 (2023: £231,804) was added during the year to the £155,649 (2023: £132,322) deferred income balance brought forward and £201,997 (2023: £208,477) was released from it, leaving £216,757 (2023: £155,649) carried forward at year end.

13. RESTRICTED FUNDS

	1 April 2022	Investment Gains/(losses)	Income	Expenditure	31 Mar 2023
	£	£	£	£	£
Presidents' Award	2,750	(194)	55	(400)	2,211
Welsh Flora	2,114	(149)	42	(750)	1,257
Scottish Officer	-	-	20,000	(20,000)	-
Scottish Training Programme	-	-	5,385	(5,385)	-
Botanical Training Fund	-	-	-	-	-
Support for Recorders	-	-	-	-	-
Holy Grass Project	-	-	-	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	4,864	(343)	25,482	(26,535)	3,468
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1 April 2023				31 Mar 2024
Presidents' Award	2,211	141	60	(240)	2,172
Welsh Flora Fund	1,257	80	34	-	1,371
Scottish Officer	-	-	22,000	(22,000)	-
Scottish Training Programme	-	-	-	-	-
Botanical Training	-	-	26,043	(10,000)	16,043
Support for Recorders	-	-	12,874	-	12,874
Holy Grass Project	-	-	3,000	(3,000)	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	3,468	221	64,011	(35,240)	32,460
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

Where the fund is sourced from an external grant, it shares in investment gains and losses only if permitted under the terms of the grant. Funds are held as shown in note 14.

The **Presidents' Award** is an expendable fund, providing an award of £300pa to individual(s) selected by the Presidents of BSBI and the Wild Flower Society for outstanding contributions to botany. This year, it was awarded to four individuals; KJ Walker, OL Pescott, PA Stroh, RJ Burkmar & TA Humphrey for their book: *Plant Atlas 2020: Mapping Changes in the Distribution of the British and Irish Flora*.

The **Welsh Flora fund** provides funding for botanical publications relating to North Wales. There were no disbursements in 2024 (2023: £750)

The **Scottish Officer** fund this year received £22,000 income which was 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** fund received donation income of £5,385 in 2022 from The MacRobert Trust. It fulfilled its specific purpose & then closed in 2022/23.

Three new funds were established in the year:

The **Botanical Training** fund was seed funded by a £10,000 grant from Britford Bridge Charitable Trust, followed by a wider BSBI fundraising campaign, resulting in a generous legacy, donations, supplemented by Big Give's Christmas Challenge 2023 <https://donate.biggive.org/christmas-challenge-2023>. The fund is being used to expand Identiplant and FISC training into Ireland and Scotland.

The **Support for Recorders** fund was also established by a successful BSBI fundraising campaign. £12,874 was raised in 2024, comprising a generous legacy from the Estate of Clive Lovatt, an important £5,000 donation from Miss Lynne Farrell, former BSBI President, other donations and Gift Aid. This is all now invested, to meet future expenditure in 2024/25 & beyond. Its four aims are to fund the work of BSBI staff to:

- 1) Develop new and emergent Recorders through support, training and mentorship
- 2) Provide training and trainer opportunities for all Recorders
- 3) Ensure BSBI's software and database support Recorders' needs, and that there is training, physical equipment and help available for their use.
- 4) Advance projects that make a meaningful contribution to botanical conservation through science and data collection

The **Holy Grass Project** fund was created by a £3,000 donation to meet the expenditure of a joint project between BSBI and Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) looking at the genetics of *Hierochloa odorata* (Holy-grass) across its disjunct populations in Britain and Scandinavia. The expected £3,500 project costs are also funded by a BSBI Science & Research grant of £500.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

13. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	2024	2023
	£	£
General Fund		
At the beginning of the year	670,351	804,108
Incoming resources	749,897	529,352
Resources expended	(629,680)	(556,410)
Investment (losses)/gains	42,792	(56,699)
Designated to Strategic Development Fund	(117,000)	(50,000)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
At the end of the year	716,360	670,351
	<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.

	2024	2023
	£	£
Strategic Development Fund		
At the beginning of the year	160,606	179,167
Resources expended	(32,142)	(59,520)
Investment Income	4,332	3,592
Investment (losses)/gains	10,252	(12,633)
Designated from General Fund	117,000	50,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
At the end of the year	260,048	160,606
	<hr/>	<hr/>

The purpose of the Strategic Development Fund is to meet expenditure designed to deliver BSBI's Strategy designed to place BSBI on a long-term financially sustainable footing. The Funds are held as shown in note 14.

14. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

	Investments	Other Net	Total
	£	Assets	£
	£	£	£
As at 31 March 2024:			
Restricted Income Funds			
Presidents' Award	2,172	-	2,172
Welsh Flora	1,371	-	1,371
Scottish Officer	-	-	-
Scottish Training Programme	-	-	-
Botanical Training	-	16,043	16,043
Support for Recorders	-	12,874	12,874
Holy Grass Project	-	-	-
Unrestricted Income Funds			
General Fund	565,041	151,319	716,360
Strategic Development Fund	160,606	99,442	260,048
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	729,190	279,678	1,008,868

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

14. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS (contd)

As at 31 March 2023:

Restricted Income Funds

Presidents' Award Fund	2,211	-	2,211
Welsh Flora Fund	1,257	-	1,257
Scottish Officer Fund	-	-	-

Unrestricted Income Funds

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/>

15. COMMITMENTS

As at 31 March 2024, The Society had commitments to 35 training and research grants awarded in Spring 2024, totalling £9,987 (2023: 23 grants, £9,298). There was also one £250 Flora grant commitment (2023: nil). Grants for external training are normally paid after the completion of the training course or research. Grants awarded before Spring 2024 are recorded as expenditure, having been either paid or accrued at year end.

BSBI has three office leases. Two in Harrogate; one for the Head of Science's office, the other 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 third lease, signed in May 2024 for 12 months in advance is for office space at Cambridge University Botanic Gardens for BSBI's Scientific Officer. The total non-cancellable commitment under these leases is calculated at up to 2 months for each lease, amounting to £571 (2023: £238).

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

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

	2024	2023
	£	£
Net income / (expenditure) for the year	174,443	(153,714)
Adjustments for:		
Losses / (gains) on investments	(53,265)	69,675
Dividends and interest from investments and deposits	(22,498)	(20,594)
Investment management charges	6,644	6,774
(Increase) / decrease in stocks	2,043	(3,281)
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	(88,409)	15,585
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	71,538	34,350
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net Cash inflow/(outflow) generated by/ (used in) operating activities	90,496	(51,205)
	<hr/>	<hr/>

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

17. POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS

In July 2024, a letter was received from the solicitors of the late Michael Elliott Braithwaite, who passed away in late 2023, notifying BSBI of a legacy expected to be in the region of £250,000. The final value will be known when the estate is settled.

The Board of Trustees is hugely appreciative of this exceptionally generous gift from this longstanding supporter of BSBI, especially the botanical activities in the area of Scotland where he lived.

Discussions will take place at the September 2024 Board meeting to decide how this valuable funding might best be used and, in the meantime, the first instalment of £150,000 has been invested.

This is deemed to be a non-adjusting Post Balance Sheet Event and this income will therefore be reported in 2024/25.