

Wildlife and  
Countryside

LINK



# Wildlife and Countryside Link

(A company limited by guarantee)

Company number: 03889519

## Annual Report 2016

The Trustees submit their report together with the financial statements of Wildlife and Countryside Link for the year ended 31 December 2016.

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## A Message from Link's Chair

I am delighted to introduce Link Trustees' Annual Report, which highlights both our achievements in the last year and our exciting future plans.

2016 was a remarkable and challenging year in so many respects. The changes made in 2015, to help Link achieve our 2015-19 Strategy, enabled us to rise to these challenges, ensuring we continued to deliver value and support to members even in demanding circumstances. Our improved systems for planning and reporting, and an enhanced staff team, meant Link was well placed to respond quickly and effectively. Brexit will continue to be a major focus of Link's work in the coming years, ensuring that we support members in addressing the opportunities and threats posed by the possibility of significant legislative change. It is at times such as these that collective action is vital and Link is perfectly positioned to do that.

A key strategic objective is to increase our impact and influence by working more effectively with members. We achieved this through many initiatives, which included focusing on the opportunities and challenges presented by Brexit, alongside a number of other key areas of importance to our members.

Our Brexit work included developing a set of policies to replace the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), developing legal advice on the potential implications for environmental legislation, and collaborating to organise a conference on the challenges and opportunities for animal welfare once the UK leaves the EU. Of course there are many other important issues outside Brexit that the Link team worked on over the year. These included: continued work advocating for a network of Marine Protected Areas; ensuring the importance of the natural environment is recognised in planning guidance and decision-making; giving evidence to the Environmental Food and Rural Affairs Committee's inquiry on Future Flood Prevention; and providing Defra with advice on future invasive species legislation. In a number of key areas, this involved working collaboratively with our sister Links in the devolved countries.

Much of our policy, advocacy and campaigns activities are developed and delivered through our specialist working groups, which are at the core of Link. The expertise and dedication that Link members bring to these groups cannot be overstated. Working with the Link staff team, our specialist groups provide members with an outstanding opportunity to collaborate and develop joint positions on a huge range of environmental topics and have a significant influence on policy makers. I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the huge contribution that everyone involved in working groups makes to the work of Link.

Despite the challenging year, the new Link team has worked very well, continually delivering added value for members. The team needed to reprioritise its programme mid-term, whilst ensuring that non-Brexit work continued, and it is testament to the commitment, creativity and professionalism of our staff that many of the objectives originally envisaged for 2016 were still achieved.

I am pleased to report that our finances continue to be in good shape and would like to thank our 47 members whose subscriptions represent a significant proportion of our unrestricted income. In line with our ambition to diversify our sources of income, we are also grateful for financial support from a number of charitable trusts who share our enthusiasm and ambition for Link: the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the John Ellerman Foundation and the Calouste-Gulbenkian Foundation. David Lind, our Honorary Treasurer, plays a very significant role in keeping Link's finances in good order and we are indebted to his commitment and expertise.

Looking ahead, there are significant opportunities for Link. Brexit, and the change that will inevitably follow, will continue to form a major stream of work for Link, alongside our focus on other important environmental issues. We also need to improve our own structures to ensure transparency and openness, and this will be achieved with the completion of a governance review.

Link is very fortunate to benefit from a talented staff team, led by Link's Director, Elaine King, an engaged and experienced Board of Trustees, a committed membership and supportive funders, all of whom make a huge contribution to Link's work. Our natural systems are under increasing pressures and the advent of Brexit has created a great deal of uncertainty, but opportunities, too. I truly believe that, by acting collectively, the sector can achieve much better policy outcomes. I believe that Link is the right organisation to deliver that.

Dr Hazel Norman, Chair

## Reference and Administrative Details

### Link Trustees

Hazel Norman, Chair  
Paul Miner, Deputy Chair  
David Lind, Treasurer (Re-appointed 8 December 2016)  
Chris Butler-Stroud, Trustee  
Marcus Gilleard, Trustee  
Nicola Hutchinson, Trustee (Re-appointed 8 December 2016)  
Stephen Trotter, Trustee  
Nikki Williams, Trustee

### Company Registered Number

03889519

### Charity Registered Number

1107460

### Principal Office Address

89 Albert Embankment  
Vauxhall  
London  
SE1 7TP

### Company Secretary and Director

Dr Elaine King

### Independent Examiner

John Speed  
JS2 Limited  
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Woking  
Surrey  
GU21 6HR

### Bankers

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

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

### Solicitors

Russell-Cooke Solicitors  
2 Putney Hill  
London  
SW15 6AB

## Objectives and Activities

### Our objectives and strategy

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

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

### How do we achieve our charitable objectives?

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

We began to implement our ambitious five year strategy in 2015, which reflects the recognition that we need to adapt and evolve in response to an ever-changing political and financial environment. Our ambition for Link is clear - to be a powerful, credible and effective voice for the natural environment and for our member organisations, delivering influence and impact, while enhancing our delivery of clear added value to our members' work.

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

**1: Increase and focus Link's influence and impact**

**2: Strengthen our network of relationships and communications**

**3: Increase members' capacity and consolidate our membership**

**4: Grow our capability and establish our financial resilience**

Throughout 2016, we continued to build on and strengthen what is already good at Link, increasing our capacity and competence, and therefore enhancing our engagement, influence and impact with Government, while delivering even more added value for members.

We have made progress in diversifying our sources of income, intended to reduce dependence on members' subscriptions and donations. Our approach is to ensure that Link is financially sustainable in the long term, while maintaining our members at the heart of what we do and how we do it.

In October 2015, supported by a grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, we restructured the Link staff team and created a number of new roles. The new team, led by Link's Director, Dr Elaine King, now comprises six highly capable individuals with the skills and competences necessary to deliver Link's strategy. The team is also well placed to work with members in dealing effectively with the challenges and opportunities presented by the result of the EU Referendum vote in June 2016.

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

### How do we deliver these objectives?

- **Through leadership:**
  - Horizon scanning, gathering intelligence and proactively advising and supporting members
  - Developing networks of relationships which help us deliver impact for members
  - Delivering focused campaigns and advocacy messages that, when working together with members, will have the most impact, for example by implementing powerful ‘set pieces’ of work
- **Through support:**
  - Advising and supporting working groups which address a range of policy issues
  - Collaborating with members to develop strong and influential joint policies
  - Facilitating the sharing of information and intelligence
  - Providing an accessible and safe place for identifying and ironing-out tensions
  - Developing joint policies and advocacy plans

### Public Benefit requirement

The Trustees of Wildlife and Countryside Link confirm that the organisation has Charitable Purposes pursuant to the Charities Act 2006. The Trustees believe that there are clear and identifiable public benefits arising from the pursuit of Wildlife and Countryside Link’s aims and objectives, and that these benefits are freely available to the general public without restriction.

### AGM and Annual Debate

Link’s Annual General Meeting took place on 8 December 2016 at the Zoological Society of London’s Huxley Lecture Theatre. The AGM included an update on progress on delivering Link’s 2015-2019 strategy, a presentation on the results of Link’s member satisfaction survey, and an update on Link’s work following the EU referendum. The AGM also saw the re-appointment of David Lind (RSPCA) as Link’s Treasurer and Nicola Hutchinson (Plantlife) as an Ordinary Trustee.

Following the AGM, Link hosted a debate entitled “Our Natural Environment in 2040: Better or Worse?” This subject was considered timely as the Government prepared to publish the consultations for their two 25 year Plans for the Environment and for Food and Farming.

Link was pleased to welcome five experts to inform and engage the audience in a thought provoking debate about the opportunities and challenges for the natural environment over the next 25 years. The speakers were: Baroness Barbara Young, Chair of the Woodland Trust; Sir Charles Burrell, rewilding pioneer and owner of the Knepp Estate; Professor Georgina Mace, Director of the Centre for Biodiversity and Environment Research, UCL; Dr Diane Mitchell, Chief Environment Advisor, NFU; and Martin Harper, Conservation Director, RSPB. Dr Nathalie Pettorelli, Senior Research Fellow, Zoological Society of London, chaired the debate.

## Achievements and Performance

### Our Impact

Throughout 2016, Link continued to present collective messages to those who have the capacity to bring about change - in Government, and elsewhere. We also supported and facilitated collaborative working across Link's member organisations on a wide range of issues.

Much of Link's policy, advocacy and campaigns activities are developed and delivered through our specialist working groups, which draw on the huge expertise of our members. Each group is managed by a dedicated member of the Link team, in partnership with the Chair and Vice Chair of the group. Additional strategic and operational input is provided by other members of the Link team, especially by the Communications Manager and Head of Policy and Campaigns, which were new posts created following the introduction of Link's new Strategy 2015-19.

In 2016 Link managed and provided support for eleven groups on the following policy areas:

- Agriculture: Chair, Helen Chesshire (The Woodland Trust); Vice-chair, Dominic Dyer (Badger Trust)
- Animal Welfare: Chair, Alyx Elliot (World Animal Protection); Vice Chair, Claire Bass (Humane Society International-UK)
- Invasive Non-Native Species: Chair, Camilla Morrison-Bell (British Ecological Society); Vice-chair, Jess Chappell (RSPB)
- Environment Links UK Habitats and Birds: Chair, Kate Jennings (RSPB)
- Land Use Planning: Chair, Victoria Bankes Price (Woodland Trust)
- Legal Strategy: Chair, Matt Shardlow (Buglife); Vice Chair, Carol Day (RSPB)
- Marine: Chair, Joan Edwards (The Wildlife Trusts); Vice Chair, Melissa Moore (Marine Conservation Society)
- Blueprint for Water: Chair, Hannah Freeman (Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust); Vice Chair, Hannah Blackburn (WWF UK)
- Whales: Chair, Jenny Lonsdale (Environment Investigation Agency); Vice Chair, Mark Simmonds (Humane Society International-UK)
- Wildlife Crime and Trade: Chair, Mark Jones (Born Free Foundation); Vice Chair, Emily Wilson (World Animal Protection)
- 25 Year Plan for Nature: Chair, Paul Wilkinson (The Wildlife Trusts); Vice Chair, Christine Reid (The Woodland Trust)

2016 was very much a year of two halves, defined by the EU Referendum result in June. With a new Strategy in place, including improved systems for planning and reporting, and an enhanced staff team, Link was able to respond quickly and effectively to members' appetite to address the challenges and threats posed by Brexit.

Below we have set out some examples of our achievements in 2016.

### Responding to Brexit

In the period immediately following the EU Referendum, Link convened a workshop for its members to help define our collective response to the challenges and opportunities presented by the EU Referendum result, reconfiguring our policy and campaigns work, and reaching out to other organisations and coalitions to maximise the opportunities for effective collaboration. Specific initiatives that followed include:

- ***Understanding and responding to the loss of EU environmental and animal welfare protections***

A key element of Link's immediate activities after the EU Referendum, was to draw on the collective expertise of Link's members to develop legal advice on the potential implications of Brexit for environmental legislation. This work included analysing the legal implications and options regarding the Great Repeal Bill, especially identifying areas that may be vulnerable to being left out of any transitional arrangements for technical reasons. Link also worked with members to develop legislative proposals for potential new legislation, and to support and advise Link members in planning policy, advocacy and campaigning work on this important issue.

Policy advice was also developed on regulations and Directives that may come under pressure from Ministers, or from industry, to be left out of any domestic legislative framework or weakened due to a perception that they may hinder economic growth or are overly bureaucratic. To illustrate the importance of Directives and legislation to the environment and society, Link members prepared “stories of jeopardy to bring the risks to life”.

Link also worked with industry to find common ground on improving the implementation of the Habitats Directive, to reduce the chances of it being a target for being weakened during the process of leaving the EU.

- ***Campaigning for a better natural environment in 2040***

Link’s 25 Year Plan Group continued to champion a plan for the environment that will deliver on the Government’s 2015 manifesto commitment to leave the natural environment in a better condition for the next generation. A 25 Year plan for the environment, and one for food and farming, represents a key mechanism by which the Government expects to deliver its ambition. However, the release of both plans was delayed following the EU Referendum and, at the end of 2016, the Government had still not published a framework plan for public consultation and there remains no published Government timetable for the release of either 25 Year Plan.

Link’s work in this area continues to be a high priority, now the Government has repositioned the 25 Year Plan process as a means for determining what future environmental policies and legislative framework might be adopted for England after leaving the EU.

- ***A vision for farming post-Brexit***

In 2015, Link’s publication [Farming Fit for the Future](#) set out a vision for securing a thriving farming sector which is better for nature, people, our countryside and our livestock. Building on this work in the context of Brexit, in the latter half of 2016 Link worked with members to develop a set of policies to replace the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) that will seek to embed our vision into a new agricultural framework once we leave the EU.

In September, Link’s [response](#) to the Environmental Audit Committee’s inquiry was the first significant opportunity to publicly advocate a joint sector voice on the future of EU legislation and on a replacement for CAP. 27 organisations signed up to the Link response on these two key post-Brexit issues.

- ***A vision for animal protection***

A key element of Link’s work with members is to address animal welfare and protection issues. In 2016, Link’s Welfare Strategy Group collaborated with the Association of Lawyers for Animal Welfare (ALAW), in organising a conference on the challenges and opportunities for animal welfare once the UK leaves the EU. Representatives from 44 organisations - including animal protection organisations, barristers and academics - came together to discuss the options for the UK’s future legislation. Link, ALAW and organisations that attended the conference, are now taking forward a number of initiatives that will provide a strong, coherent message to Government regarding the future of animal protection.

#### **Other work not related directly to Brexit**

- ***Uniting to defend vital European legislation***

The EU Nature Directives have provided the highest level of protection to vulnerable habitats and species for the past 30 years. Working in collaboration with our sister Links across the UK ([Environment Links UK - ELUK](#)), we were [successful](#) in advocating for the protection of Europe’s natural environment. The European Commission’s ‘fitness ‘check’ review of these vital laws proved that they are not just fit for purpose, but can be some of the most effective nature conservation laws in the world. Together, the [voices of 100 ELUK members](#) helped to secure the strong political backing needed to save these laws. This success showcased one of Link’s key strengths - its ability to harness large numbers of NGOs and bring them together as a single voice.



- ***Campaigning for a healthy and resilient marine environment***

Link's Marine Working Group has long advocated for an ambitious, well-managed ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Early in 2016, the UK Government designated 23 new Marine Conservation Zones, representing a key step towards our shared ambition. Key to our work has been to maintain a productive relationship with Government officials and Defra Ministers, George Eustice and Therese Coffey. With our sister Links - Environment Links UK - Link also submitted [evidence](#) to the Environmental Audit Committee's inquiry into MPAs, as well as hosting a parliamentary drop-in event for MPs to sign and discuss Link's [Marine Charter](#).

- ***Contributing to the work of the International Whaling Commission (IWC)***

Link's Whales Working Group continued its positive and close engagement with the UK Commissioner to the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in 2016, and provided a comprehensive briefing to the Government on key issues planned for discussion at the 2016 IWC meeting.

- ***Translating science into better policy messages for polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)***

Link helped transform new scientific findings of one of its member organisations into contemporary policy objectives. Working with members, Link published an influential [briefing paper on PCBs](#) for the 2016 International Whaling Commission meeting (IWC66), and our advocacy on this issue is extending to other forums such as two international cetacean agreements and Government scientific committees.

- ***Making wildlife crime recordable***

One of the key work areas for our Wildlife Crime and Trade Group is to advocate for wildlife crime to be recordable in the UK. Tackling wildlife crime in the UK is not afforded the prioritisation and resources that it deserves, partly due to a lack of understanding of the scale of this type of crime. In 2016, the Group commissioned a report to investigate the feasibility and advantages of collecting data on wildlife crime. Due for publication in 2017, the report will form a key strand of Link's work in making a strong and robust case to Government that wildlife crime is a major issue in the UK, and that data must be collected in order to allocate police force resources most effectively.

- ***Promoting sustainable development and habitat protection through planning***

Link's Land Use Planning Group worked throughout 2016 to highlight the importance of planning conditions that put nature first and protect areas of high environmental value. Whilst engaging with the Department for Communities and Local Government, the group also advocated for quality homes and communities in their briefings and responses to the National Planning Policy Framework, the Housing and Planning Bill, and the Neighbourhood Planning Bill. Particularly, the group called on the government to avoid development on brownfield sites with high environmental value. Link's advocacy in 2016 contributed to the Government stating that it "*recognises the importance and value of certain pre-commencement conditions in promoting sustainable development and ensuring that necessary safeguards are put in place for important matters including heritage and the natural environment.*"

- ***Encouraging natural flood management***

In April 2016, Link's Blueprint for Water Group gave [evidence](#) to the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee on Future Flood Prevention, highlighting the importance of using natural systems to prevent flooding and support resilient landscapes to deliver multiple benefits. This contributed to a significant change of approach within Government towards viewing Natural Flood Management (NFM) as a valid management tool, with £15 million announced in November to fund NFM schemes, including planting trees to slow the flow of water, better soil management and installing leaky dams.

- ***Access to Justice***

Link's Legal Strategy Group challenged the Ministry of Justice's proposals for Judicial Review reform and changes to the Environmental Costs Protection Regime (ECPR). The proposed measures would result in it being more difficult and more costly for charities to initiate a Judicial Review. A letter was published in The Times from Link's Director and a group of leading QCs, and - as part of Environment Links UK - we advocated our [views](#) at the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Task Force for Access to Justice in Brussels. The Government has recently pulled back considerably from introducing many of the measures which concerned us. The Group will keep pressure on the MoJ on this important issue and our views are likely being taken into account in decisions.

- ***Dealing with the threats posed by Invasive Non Native Species***

Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) are a growing concern in the UK, in large part due to the threats they pose to native species. Link's INNS Group is an active member of the INNS England Working Group, convened by Defra and the GB Non Native Species Secretariat, which works to ensure implementation of the GB Non Native Species Strategy. Defra relies upon and values Link's expertise, with members of the Group being invited to lead on delivery of specific actions from the Strategy Implementation Plan. The Group was also asked by Defra in 2016 to provide its vision for future invasive species legislation in the UK post-Brexit.

- ***Collaborative working with our sister Links***

For over two decades, Link has worked very closely with our sister Links in the devolved countries, more recently as 'Environment Links UK' (ELUK). In 2016, we continued to work with ELUK on a number of initiatives regarding the conservation and protection of the [marine environment](#) and in defending the [Habitats and Birds Directives](#). We also established an ELUK Strategy and MoU to guide and inform our collaborative work.

Link's Director continues to contribute to and benefit from a productive relationship with the three Directors of our sister Links. Directors hold quarterly phone meetings, in addition to a more or less weekly exchange of emails. The Directors regularly share both strategic and operational information and are constantly exploring ways in which they can work together to effect positive change across the UK.

At the end of 2016, the Environment Links UK Brexit Nature Coalition was established to advocate for strong environmental outcomes across the UK post Brexit, along with seeking to influence the Government's Great Repeal Bill. The Group comprises legal and policy experts from across the four UK Link organisations - Scottish Environment Link, Wales Environment Link, Northern Ireland Environment Link and Wildlife and Countryside Link.

## **Communications**

A key element of Link's strategy is to improve communications across all of our work. This enables Link to maximise our collective impact and influence on Government policy, while also delivering tangible benefits for both our members and stakeholders across the environment sector as a whole. In 2016, Link's Communications Manager continued to work with members and the Link team to enhance the impact and influence of both Link and our member organisations.

Communications work in 2016 included developing a Communications Strategy, along with a Web Content and Social Strategy, setting out a clear vision for content management and development, and ensuring that the website promotes all aspects of Link's work in a timely, effective way.

Achievements included increasing Link's profile on social media; planning and delivering communications for a high impact Link campaign - defending the [Habitats and Birds Directives](#); supporting a Link Marine Charter parliamentary event, and providing support, advice and specific input to a number of other campaigns and advocacy initiatives across a wide range of Link's work areas, particularly that on the 25 year environment plan.

The success of Link's communications work stems from the fact that Link creates a truly collaborative joint voice for its members. For example, the campaign to defend the Habitats and Birds Directives created a huge impact in the media. Individual Link member organisations were directly credited in addition to Link, demonstrating our ability to promote the work of members and highlight the value of collaboration.

Link's new website (launched in December 2015) was viewed over 68,000 times in 2016, reflecting a 450% increase compared to the previous website. The blog section was, and continues to be, the most visited page after the home page and is proving to be an excellent space for members to both share their views and promote a joint sector voice. In 2016, Link published 60 blogs, and ran two blog series - one focussing on the 25 Year Plan for the Environment, *#Planfornature*, the second on Brexit - *#Brexit*.

We know that the website - and the blogs in particular - are hugely influential. For example, Link's blogs are used by Government officials and other key decision-makers as a source of valuable information and comment. Link's blogs also generate media coverage for Link and its members. For example, after seeing a [blog](#) on Link's website, the Daily Mirror published an [article](#) about the uncertain future of the Government's National Wildlife Crime Unit.

A Link [press release](#) and series of [blogs](#) to mark Invasive Species Week 2016 also resulted in coverage for Link and member organisations in the Daily Mail, the Daily Express and the Sun, together with articles in regional and specialist publications. Link also issued a [press release](#) and series of [blogs](#) responding to the result of the EU Referendum.

### **Member Survey 2016**

A Member Survey, conducted in November 2016, confirmed that members are supportive of Link's approach and consider that Link is adding value to their own work. For example, 81% of respondents most valued the opportunity to develop a joint sector voice as a Link member. Of second greatest importance was the opportunity to share intelligence and engage with other NGOs. 91% of respondents felt it was important for Link to continue to function as part of a UK wide network of Links, and the blog pages were considered to be the most valued part of the new Link website.

### **Influencing and stakeholder engagement**

Throughout 2016, Link continued to communicate widely with external stakeholders, such as Ministers, Government officials and senior leadership teams at Natural England, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and the Environment Agency, promoting the work of our members and creating opportunities for them and for Link. Meetings were also held throughout 2016 with other key bodies such as Ofwat, the International Whaling Commission, the Crown Prosecution Service, the Marine Management Organisation and a range of water companies.

Throughout its stakeholder engagement work, Link has continued to develop constructive relationships with and gain support from a wide range of organisations and external agencies. Through these trusted relationships, Link has been able to gather information and intelligence to help inform and shape our collaborative work, strengthen the voice of the sector and, ultimately, increase impact for our members. For example, feedback received from officials confirms that our collaborative submissions to Government consultations are influential and highly regarded.

### **Addressing wider challenges**

In recent years, significant challenges have emerged for Link, our members and the broader charity sector, regarding fundraising, lobbying and access to justice. Link's members increasingly need a powerful, coherent voice to represent them on these over-arching and important issues. In 2016, members of the Link team liaised with organisations outside the environment sector, such as Bond, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and the Association for Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO), to share information, plan collaborative work and advocate for the voices of charities to be heard. This work will continue in 2017.

### **Financial resilience**

One of Link's four strategic objectives is to improve Link's sustainability and financial resilience. Recognising the changing - and increasingly challenging - funding environment, Link's Board approved a Fundraising Strategy in 2016 which focusses on diversifying Link's income and, in particular, exploring innovative sources of funding, along with maintaining financial support from member organisations and charitable trusts.

## Structure, Governance and Management

### Leadership

In 2016 Link saw the re-appointment of David Lind (Accountant, RSPCA) as Treasurer and Nicola Hutchinson (Plantlife) as an Ordinary Trustee for a second term.

Link's Board of Trustees, and its Finance and Resources Sub Committee, each held four meetings during 2016, including its annual away day meeting in July.

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

The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. In 2007 the Memorandum and Articles of Association were reviewed, both to ensure compliance with the Companies Act (2006) and Charities Act (2006), and following a number of years using the previous Memorandum and Articles of Association which had raised the need for further clarification.

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

### Risk Management

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

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

All staff also ensure that protocols and procedures are adhered to, and the finances are closely monitored to ensure expenditure is appropriate and within reasonable limits, and adequate resources are in place. Link's Communications Manager also has experience in crisis management, and works with our Director and Trustees to reduce potential risks to Link's reputation.

### Pay Policy for senior staff

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

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

## Volunteers

Link continues to offer volunteering opportunities to people with a keen interest in Link issues. In 2016, we benefitted from the help of Mark Purrmann Charles and Thomas Pye.

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

## Independent Examiner

A resolution to confirm the appointment of John Speed from JS2 as independent examiner to the organisation for a second consecutive year was passed at the Annual General Meeting in December 2016.

## Exemptions from Disclosure

There are no exemptions required.

## Funds held as custodian Trustee on behalf of others

Link does not have a custodian Trustee.

## Financial Review

Here we summarise financial information to give an overview of the charity's financial performance during 2016, by using selected information from the full annual accounts set out later in this document.

### A Message from Link's Treasurer

The 2016 accounts are showing that Link has improved its financial resilience during the year.

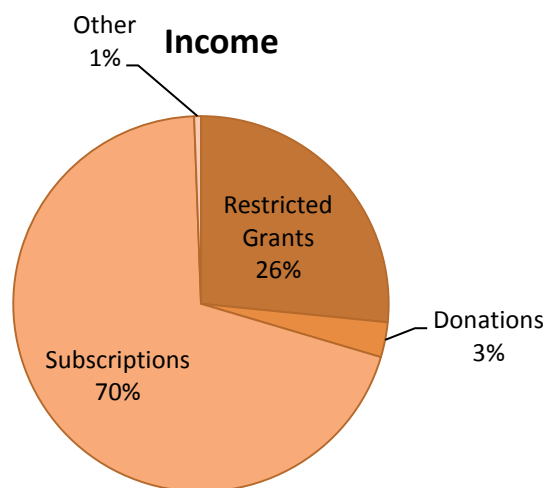


Figure 1: Summary of Link's income for 2016

During 2016 a number of restricted grants contributed towards funding the ongoing implementation of Link's five year Strategy 2015-19. Link's total income in 2016 (see fig 1) was £208,604 (2015 £292,832) with £55,000 (2015 £147,486) coming from grant making bodies. An increase in the number of members contributed to a rise in subscriptions income received in the year: £145,857 (2015 £133,501). This is anticipated to continue to grow in forthcoming years.

Link's total expenditure (see fig 2) amounted to £266,016 (2015 £248,715) which resulted in a deficit of £57,412 for the year. However, this was a planned deficit, as a number of restricted grants were received in 2015 but were applied to the expenditure in 2016.

Expenditure relating to unrestricted funds accounted for 42% of total expenditure with the remaining 58% relating to restricted grants. Total expenditure on staff costs are shown in note 5, which totalled £201,649 in 2016. This is an increase over the 2015 spend of £28,890 and reflects the growth in the team which is critical for the implementation of Link's five year Strategy. However, as in past years, this does not take account of the contribution made to Link's collaborative work by staff within our member organisations, who help us to achieve so much. These results show that Link has, and continues to, develop a secure financial model based on member subscriptions with a level of grants that allow Link to maximise its effectiveness for its members.

Link's Reserve policy is to maintain free reserves of six months operating expenditure, over a rolling period of three years. This allows Link's Board of Trustees to maximise the use of the financial reserves but demands a plan to achieve the policy. At 31 December 2016, free reserves amounted to 12.5 months, but total reserves (including restricted funds) were 6.8 months. This level of reserves will allow Link to continue to implement the current five year Strategy.

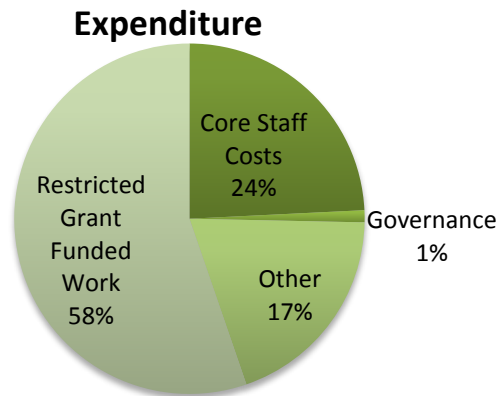


Figure 2: Summary of Link's expenditure in 2016

## Grants

A key element of the Director's work in 2016 was developing and maintaining productive relationships with current and potential funders. In 2016, Link continued to benefit from grants from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the John Ellerman Foundation, and Link member WWF-UK.

Link also received donations from a number of member organisations. Additionally, Link secured a grant of £2000 from the Marine Protected Area Fighting Fund to fund the design and printing of Link's Marine Charter.

In 2016, grants from charitable trusts continued to represent a key mechanism by which Link could deliver its five year Strategy. The remaining portion of a one-year grant from the Calouste-Gulbenkian Foundation, awarded in 2015, supported the post of Link's Communications Manager.

A major grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, awarded in 2015, supported the restructuring of the Link team in that year and, in 2016, continued to support two Link posts: Director and Head of Policy and Campaigns. In addition, Link's Marine Policy and Campaigns Manager role continued to be funded by a grant from the John Ellerman Foundation, ensuring effective Link support for the Marine and Whales Working Groups.

The other two posts at Link - Information and Policy Coordinator, and Policy and Campaigns Manager - continued to be funded through unrestricted core income, largely from member subscriptions. WWF-UK also supports Link in continuing our core operations and projects that support WWF's objectives. This involves a variety of Link's work areas, such as illegal wildlife trade, the freshwater environment and our marine and whales groups.

WWF-UK also provides a grant to the four Links of Environment Links UK (Wildlife and Countryside Link, Wales Environment Link, Scottish Environment LINK and Northern Ireland Environment Link) in support of their collaborative work across the UK.

David Lind, Treasurer

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all of those individuals and organisations that made 2016 a great year for Link, including our members, partners, funders and colleagues. With their generous support, we will continue to work hard in 2017 and beyond to conserve and protect wildlife and the countryside.

## Preparation of the report

This report has been prepared taking advantage of the small companies' exemption of section 415A of the Companies Act 2006. It was approved, and authorised for issue, by the Trustees on 7 June 2017 and signed on its behalf by:

Dr Hazel Norman, Chair

## Independent Examiners Report to the Members of Wildlife and Countryside Link

I report on the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2016 set out on pages 15 to 24.

This report is made solely to the Trustees, as a body, in accordance with regulations made under section 154 of the Charities Act 2011. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the Trustees matters I am required to state to them in an Independent Examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Trustees for my independent examination work, for this report, or for the statement I have given below.

### **Respective responsibilities of Trustees and independent examiner**

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility:

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

### **Basis of independent examiner's statement**

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

### **Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention to indicate that:

- accounting records have not been kept in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006;
- the accounts do not accord with such records;
- where accounts are prepared on an accruals basis, whether they fail to comply with relevant accounting requirements under section 396 of the Companies Act 2006, or are not consistent with the Charities SORP (FRS102)
- any matter which the examiner believes should be drawn to the attention of the reader to gain a proper understanding of the accounts.

### **JOHN SPEED FCA**

JS2 Limited  
One Crown Square  
Woking  
Surrey  
GU21 6HR

Date:



## Statement of Financial Activities

For the year ended 31 December 2016

(Incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account)

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2016 £	Restricted Funds 2016 £	Total Funds 2016 £	Total Funds 2015 £
<b>INCOME</b>					
Donations and legacies	2	6,290	-	6,290	8,973
Income from Charitable activities:					
Grants for project work	10	-	55,500	55,500	147,486
Subscriptions		145,857	-	145,857	133,501
Rent and service charges receivable		-	-	-	1,141
Other trading activities:					
Income from investments		957	-	957	1,731
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>153,104</b>	<b>55,500</b>	<b>208,604</b>	<b>292,832</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>					
Expenditure on Charitable activities	3	112,991	153,025	266,016	248,715
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>112,991</b>	<b>153,025</b>	<b>266,016</b>	<b>248,715</b>
Net income/(expenditure)		40,113	(97,525)	(57,412)	44,117
Transfers between funds	10	-	-	-	-
<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>		<b>40,113</b>	<b>(97,525)</b>	<b>(57,412)</b>	<b>44,117</b>
TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD		77,416	131,053	208,469	164,352
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>		<b>£ 117,529</b>	<b>£ 33,528</b>	<b>£ 151,057</b>	<b>£ 208,469</b>

The annexed notes form part of these financial statements



Registered Company number 03889519

## Balance Sheet

As at 31 December 2016

	Notes	2016	2015
		£	£
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
Tangible assets	7	1	694
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Debtors	8	8,556	7,773
Cash at bank and in hand		149,967	206,176
		<u>158,523</u>	<u>213,949</u>
<b>CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year</b>	9	(7,467)	(6,174)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<u>151,056</u>	<u>207,775</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<u>151,057</u>	<u>208,469</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<u>£ 151,057</u>	<u>£ 208,469</u>
<b>FUNDS</b>			
Restricted funds		33,528	131,053
General fund (unrestricted)		117,529	77,416
		<u>£ 151,057</u>	<u>£ 208,469</u>

For the year ended 31 December 2016 the Company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

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

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime. They were approved, and authorised for issue, by the directors on 7 June 2017 and signed on their behalf by:-

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr Hazel Norman, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
David Lind, Treasurer

The annexed notes form part of these financial statements

**Statement of Cash Flows****For the year ended 31 December 2016**

	£	2016 £	£	2015 £
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM</b>				
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES:</b>				
Net income/(expenditure) for the year	(57,412)		44,117	
Adjustments for:				
Depreciation charges	693		1,593	
Interest	(957)		(1,731)	
(Increase) in debtors	(783)		(272)	
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	1,293		(1,195)	
<b>NET CASH PROVIDED BY (USED IN)</b>				
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES:</b>		(57,166)		42,512
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM</b>				
<b>INVESTING ACTIVITIES:</b>				
Interest	957		1,731	
<b>NET CASH PROVIDED BY (USED IN)</b>		957		1,731
<b>INVESTING ACTIVITIES:</b>				
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		<u>(56,209)</u>		<u>44,243</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		206,176		161,933
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		<u>£ 149,967</u>		<u>£ 206,176</u>

The annexed notes form part of these financial statements

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### For the year ended 31 December 2016

#### 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

##### Basis of preparation of financial statements

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

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

##### Company status

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

##### Fund accounting

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

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

##### Income

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

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

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

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

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

### Expenditure

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

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

### Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

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

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

Fixtures and fittings -	4 years
Office equipment -	4 years

### Operating leases

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

## 2. VOLUNTARY INCOME

	Unrestricted Funds 2016 £	Restricted Funds 2016 £	Total Funds 2016 £	Total Funds 2015 £
Donations	1,290	-	1,290	8,973
Grants for core funding	5,000	-	5,000	-
	<u>£ 6,290</u>	<u>£ Nil</u>	<u>£ 6,290</u>	<u>£ 8,973</u>

Voluntary income in 2015 consisted entirely of unrestricted income.

## 3. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES: FACILITATION, COORDINATION & INFORMATION PROVISION

	Unrestricted Funds 2016 £	Restricted Funds 2016 £	Total Funds 2016 £	Total Funds 2015 £
Staff costs	64,433	137,216	201,649	172,759
Support costs (see Note 4)	2,954	-	2,954	4,737
Other costs	45,604	15,809	61,413	71,219
	<u>£ 112,991</u>	<u>£ 153,025</u>	<u>£ 266,016</u>	<u>£ 248,715</u>

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

	Unrestricted Funds 2016 £	Restricted Funds 2016 £	Total Funds 2016 £	<i>Total Funds 2015 £</i>
<b>GOVERNANCE:</b>				
Independent examination	2,340	-	2,340	2,280
Trustee away day	294	-	294	-
Legal and professional fees	300	-	300	2,437
Other expenses	20	-	20	20
	<u>£ 2,954</u>	<u>£ Nil</u>	<u>£ 2,954</u>	<u>£ 4,737</u>

**5. STAFF NUMBERS AND COSTS**

	2016 £	2015 £
Wages and salaries	178,970	151,478
Social security costs	15,223	14,146
Pension costs	7,456	7,135
	<u>£ 201,649</u>	<u>£ 172,759</u>
	<b>Number</b>	<i>Number</i>
The average headcount during the year was as follows:	<u>5.7</u>	<u>6.3</u>

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

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

**6. COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

During the year, no trustee received any remuneration (2015: Nil). No Trustees were reimbursed for expenses in the year (2015: 1 trustee amounting to £300).

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

## 7. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Fixture and fittings £	Office equipment £	Total £
<b>Cost</b>			
At start of year	3,017	19,398	22,415
At 31 December 2016	<u>3,017</u>	<u>19,398</u>	<u>22,415</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>			
At start of year	3,016	18,705	21,721
Charge for the year	-	693	693
At 31 December 2016	<u>3,016</u>	<u>19,398</u>	<u>22,414</u>
<b>Net book value</b>			
At 31 December 2015	£ 1	£ 693	£ 694
At 31 December 2016	<u>£ 1</u>	<u>£ Nil</u>	<u>£ 1</u>

## 8. DEBTORS

	2016 £	2015 £
Prepayments	8,556	7,773
	<u>£ 8,556</u>	<u>£ 7,773</u>

## 9. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2016 £	2015 £
Accruals	7,467	6,174
	<u>£ 7,467</u>	<u>£ 6,174</u>

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

## 10. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

	Brought Forward 1 January 2016 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Carried Forward 31 December 2016 £
<b>RESTRICTED FUNDS</b>					
1. Joint Links	394	10,000	(6,909)	-	3,485
2. Common Agricultural Policy	887	-	-	-	887
3. Marine Projects					
i) Phase II	2,506	-	-	-	2,506
ii) Phase III	16,981	40,000	(40,583)	-	16,398
iii) Marine Charter	-	2,000	(1,083)	-	917
4. Blueprint for Water	6,011	-	(1,795)	-	4,216
5. Planning Coalition	289	-	-	-	289
6. Nature Check	733	-	(17)	-	716
7. ECN	17	-	-	-	17
8. Strategic review	597	-	-	-	597
9. The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	88,450	-	(88,450)	-	-
10. The Calouste-Gulbenkian Foundation	14,188	-	(14,188)	-	-
11. Wildlife Crime and Trade		3,500			3,500
	<b>131,053</b>	<b>55,500</b>	<b>(153,025)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>33,528</b>
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>77,416</b>	<b>153,104</b>	<b>(112,991)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>117,529</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<b>£ 208,469</b>	<b>£ 208,604</b>	<b>£ (266,016)</b>	<b>£ Nil</b>	<b>£ 151,057</b>

## SUMMARY OF FUNDS IN THE PRIOR YEAR

	Brought forward 1 January 2015 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers and gains £	Carried forward 31 December 2015 £
General fund	115,200	145,346	168,130	(15,000)	77,416
Restricted funds	49,152	147,486	80,585	15,000	131,053
	<b>£ 164,352</b>	<b>£ 292,832</b>	<b>£ 248,715</b>	<b>£ Nil</b>	<b>£ 208,469</b>

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

### Purposes of restricted funds:

1. **Joint Links**

The WWF-UK Joint Links project grant supports the four Link organisations in the UK (Wildlife and Countryside Link, Wales Environment Link, Scottish Environment LINK and Northern Ireland Environment Link) in updating each other and collaborating on work programmes, key priorities, and operational matters, through meetings, email communications and conference calls. In 2016, £394 was carried over from 2015 and income to the fund in 2016 was £10,000. £6,909 was expended in 2016, with the primary expense being the Environment Links UK Biennial Conference in Cardiff. A surplus of £3,485 is carried over into 2017.
2. **Common Agricultural Policy**

This project was set up in 2008 to fund the publication and launch of the Agriculture Working Group's policy perspective on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy. The Group published a report, Farming Fit for the Future, in September 2015 and launched this at a parliamentary event. No funds have been spent since 2015 and £887 has been carried over to 2017.
3. **Marine Projects**
  - i) **MPCC Phase II**

This relates to funding provided by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation towards the costs of a full time Marine and Policy Campaigns Coordinator. The project ended on 31 January 2014 and was immediately succeeded by the MPCM Phase III. There is £2,506 left in this fund.
  - ii) **MPCC Phase III**

This relates to funding from the John Ellerman Foundation towards the costs of a full time Marine Policy and Campaigns Coordinator at Wildlife and Countryside Link. From November 2015 the post title was changed to Marine Policy and Campaigns Manager (MPCM). Due to continuation funding from the John Ellerman Foundation, this project, originally running from January 2014 – January 2017, will now run from January 2014 to January 2020. This project fund provides for the salary and some associated expenses of the post.
  - iii) **Marine Charter**

This relates to funding from the MPA Fighting Fund, on behalf of the MPA Fighting Fund, towards the cost of the Marine Charter campaign which was active from February 2014. £0 was carried over to this fund from 2015 and the Wildlife Trusts contributed £2,000 in 2016. £1,083 was spent on expenses relating to the campaign including media graphic costs, conference call expenditure, and a Parliamentary event. £917 has been carried over to 2017.
4. **Blueprint for Water**

The Blueprint for Water project was set up in 2009 to fund the publication and distribution of the Blueprint coalition's third report. £6,011 was carried forward into 2016 from 2015. £1,795 of the fund was spent in 2016, primarily on website expenses. £4,216 has been carried forward into 2017.
5. **Planning Coalition**

The Planning Coalition fund was set up in 2010 to cover costs associated with the publication and distribution of the new Greenest Planning Ever Coalition's 'Vision for the Future of Planning' report. £289 was carried over into 2016. No funds have been spent since 2014 and £289 has been carried forward into 2017.



## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

6. **Nature Check**  
The Nature Check fund was set up in 2011 to cover the costs associated with assessment, reporting and launch of project findings on the Coalition Government's performance on the natural environment, as part of its commitment to be the "greenest Government ever". £750 was carried over from 2015 into 2016. £17 was spent in 2016 on renewing the Nature Check website address. £716 has been carried over to 2017.
7. **Ecologically Coherent Network**  
This fund relates to funding from WWF-UK for Link's Ecologically Coherent Network (MPA Fighting Fund) project. The project was set up in March 2014 and covers conference calls and consultancy work relating to the project. No funds have been spent since 2014 and £17 has been carried forward into 2017.
8. **Strategic Review**  
The Strategic Review fund was set up in 2014 to fund the development of a new five year strategy for Wildlife and Countryside Link. Link funded the project with grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund's Catalyst grants scheme and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. No funds have been spent since 2014 and £597 has been carried over to 2017.
9. **The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation**  
In 2015, Link received a proportion of a two-year grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, secured to support implementation of Link's five-year strategy. £88,450 was carried over from 2015 into 2016. The fund was spent in 2016 under the terms of the grant.
10. **Calouste-Gulbenkian Foundation**  
The Calouste-Gulbenkian Foundation funds the role of Link's Communications Manager. This grant began in April 2015 and £14,188 was carried forward into 2016. The fund was spent in 2016 under the terms of the grant.

## 11. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
Tangible fixed assets	1	-	1
Net current assets	<u>117,528</u>	<u>33,528</u>	<u>151,056</u>
	<u>£ 117,529</u>	<u>£ 33,528</u>	<u>£ 151,057</u>

## 12. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

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

	2016 £	2015 £
Operating leases which expire:		
within one year	18,939	-
within two to five years	-	44,088
	<u>£ 18,939</u>	<u>£ 44,088</u>