

National Hedgelaying Society

Treasurer's Report for the Year Ended 31st December 2022

I am pleased to present the Examined Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December 2022. This examination was by Chartered Accountants, Lealindis Limited.

Chris Wade of Lealindis Limited, our 'Independent Examiner' confirms, in his report to the trustees that, in so far as he can ascertain, the accounts have been kept correctly, in accordance with relevant legislation and provide a proper account of the finances of this Society.

Being a non-company charity with a gross annual income of less than £250,000, the accounts are prepared on the Receipts and Payments basis, rather than the more complex Accruals Basis. Furthermore, because the gross annual income of the Society is less than £500,000, the accounts are required to be independently examined rather than audited. An audit is more in-depth and requires the underlying documents to be checked and verified. This is a more time-consuming exercise and hence would be more costly to the Society. However, I would have no concerns regarding these accounts being subject to audit.

Overall, the Society had a healthy balance of **£198,653** to carry forward to 2023, which represents an increase of 14% over the previous year. However, of that figure, **£69,655** were within Restricted Funds with **£128,998** of Unrestricted Funds.

Page 5 provides a direct comparison between the year ended 31st December 2022 and 31st December 2021. From this it is noted that the main increase is within the **Restricted Funds**, an increase of **£21,839** on the previous year from **£47,816** to **£69,655** whereas the change in **Unrestricted Funds** was from **£126,342** to **£128,998**.

The increase in the Restricted Funds is primarily due to grant funding from the Ernest Cook Trust of £15,000 and the remaining balance due of £12,000 under the grant funding from the Prince's Countryside Fund (PCF). The points worth noting are that the funding from the Ernest Cooke Trust was to provide for apprenticeship placements but finding such placements has been challenging and we are presently in discussions with the Ernest Cook Trust regarding other beneficial purposes to which those funds may be allocated. The balance of the funds from the PCF grant was for the Training and the development of the NHLS/Lantra Accreditation scheme which ran to the 31st March 2023. Since the year end, there has been considerable activity relating to the Training and Accreditation scheme and the balance of the PCF grant has now been fully exhausted in meeting the objectives of that funding grant.

One further element to which I wish to draw your attention is identified on **page 14** under the title of 'software, IT support and related costs'. Of the figure of £4,680, £4,536 is for the initial interim payment for the development of the new website. I can also advise that this amount has been reclaimed, but not yet reimbursed, under grant funding obtained through a partnership project with The Tree Council. This grant funding provides up to £5,000 towards the development of our new website and £3,000 per annum over a three-year period towards the employment of a Development Officer.

Additional to the great progress made to develop the Training and Accreditation Scheme, considerable time and effort has been expended on the development of a new website.

Our major annual event is the Championship. This has in the past normally been run at a financial loss but whilst this may have generated a financial loss, it should also be viewed as an expenditure in

an event to showcase the craft of hedgelaying and bring the environmental benefits of properly managed hedgerows to the attention of the wider public, an educational investment. However, as can be seen on page 13, the 2022 Championship, having regard for outstanding invoices at the year end, virtually broke even. Please also note that unlike previous years, both the income and expenditure for shows is shown separately from the Championship which explains why no figure is shown against 'shows' for 2021.

The major source of the unrestricted funds to the Society is from the Membership.

| As at Year End | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Individual | 366 | 361 | 315 |
| Affiliated | 24 | 17 | 13 |
| Contractors | 113 | 112 | 107 |
| Income | £16,905 | £16,853 | £14,468 |

The membership subscription rates remained as follows:

Individual £20

Affiliated £50

Contractor £75

It is pleasing to see the increase in the affiliated membership but we need to raise our profile to attract membership from a wider audience and to enhance the standing of the Society in general. To achieve this the Society is investing in the development of a new website, to which I referred earlier and the employment of a Development Officer who I am pleased to say is now in post.

Treasurer

Andrew C Crow