

Warwickshire Geological Conservation Group
(Registered Charity Number 1144717)

Financial statements
for the year ended 31 August 2014

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Warwickshire Geological Conservation Group Committee members' annual report for the year ended 31 August 2014

Full name Warwickshire Geological Conservation Group

Principal address

c/o Warwickshire Museum, Market Place, Warwick CV34 4SA

Committee members

Barry Dale

John Crossling

Brian Ellis – Chair

Andrew Entwistle

Ian Fenwick

Nigel Harris

Christine Hodgson

James Watts – Treasurer

Frank Wells - Secretary

Observers

Dr Jon Radley – Keeper of Geology, Warwickshire Museum

Anton Irving – Natural England

Bankers

HSBC, 46 The Square, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 1EA

Independent examiner

Nigel Grounds, Mercia Community Accounting, Lorton, Tamworth, Staffordshire

Governance and management

The organisation is operated under the rules of its constitution adopted 19th October 2011. A number of Trustees were elected or re-elected at the AGM 19th October 2013. All new Trustees attend an Induction Course soon after their election. The Trustees Folder was revised during 2013-14 and approved at the Management Committee in September 2014.

The governing body of the WGCG is the Management Committee which comprises 9 Trustees and 2 observers. There are 3 sub-committees – Education, Conservation and Publications Group – each chaired by a Trustee. In addition there is an Outreach Group, largely responsible for organising outside events. Decisions of these sub-committees are subject to approval by the Management Committee

The charity has a series of documents outlining policies and procedures relating to financial management, reserves, management of risk, safety, volunteers and conflict of interest. These are subject to periodic review by the Management Committee. The most recent versions are contained within the Trustees Folder of September 2014.

Aims and objectives

a) To advance the education of the public in the significance of geology for the understanding and aesthetic appreciation of landscapes, for human settlements and economic activity, for recreation and leisure and for ecology.

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b) To conserve the geological heritage of Warwickshire through identification and active conservation of geological sites and through fostering an interest in and knowledge of the geology and landscapes of Warwickshire.

When planning our activities the Trustees take note of the Commission's guidance on public benefit. To meet these Objects and provide 'public benefit' the Trustees have promoted a concerted programme of Education, Outreach, Conservation and Publications..It remains the Group's policy to focus on the links between these activities.

None of our work would be possible without the willing cooperation of a large number of volunteers. They are involved directly in practical activities including supporting outreach events, designating, recording and monitoring LGS and maintaining the database, curating the Group's collection, supporting the lecture and field programme, contributing to and producing the bi-annual Newsletter and other publications, dealing with local enquiries, talking to community groups and not least attending a variety of meetings. This is in addition to the large number of people who are involved in running what is an increasingly complex organization.

As reported last year the Group has received a bequest from a former member, Robert Holloway, which was invested in February 2012 so as to secure an annual income big enough to support the increased range of education, conservation, outreach and publications activities now being undertaken and to secure the long term future of the Group. The performance of the investment portfolio is monitored by a group of three Holding Trustees and is reported to the Management Committee at its bi-monthly meetings and to the membership at the AGM. Our financial adviser attends a meeting of the Management Committee once a year on the anniversary of the initial investment.

The Holloway Award, according to the wishes of the benefactor, aims to encourage an interest in geology in children and to support young geologists early in their career. A particular effort has been made this year to expand the scope of these awards. Arrangements are being put in place to support geological activities in primary and secondary schools; to support students in three universities; and to support work placements for early career geologists in the "geology industry". The Group is also making a grant to the Lapworth Museum at Birmingham University to support the redevelopment of the geology museum as a major national and regional resource for geology and geological education.

Education Programme:

The monthly winter series of lectures (September to April) attracted good audiences (average 60 per meeting) and covered a wide range of geological topics. This included three recipients of the Holloway Award, who talked about their research in Wales and Ireland as part of their MSc degree at Birmingham University. We are particularly pleased to record that one of these students, Rosie McKay, has obtained a scholarship to continue her studies at the prestigious China University of Geosciences.

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The programme of summer field excursions included Wednesday evening and weekend visits, with the latter involving one going further afield than previously to Aust Cliff and Portishead. There were two successful residential weekends; one to Shropshire led by a member, Martin Bradley, and the other to Norfolk led by Professor Peter Worsley of Reading University.

The Group ran for a second time an eight week course on Basic Geology which attracted 15 registrations and continued with its work in curating and cataloguing its specimen collection which gave an opportunity for training members and familiarizing them with some of the Group's resources.

A new venture was to run a geological activity with a Year 6 class in a village primary school. This involved some classroom preparation and a trip to a local geological site led with great success by a small group of members.

The Group hosted a second visit from the Reading Geological Society to undertake a field study of aspects of the geology of North Warwickshire, using some of the Group's designated Local Geological Sites (LGS).

Education via Public Events (Outreach):

Activities have included mounting exhibitions and displays. To provide public educational benefit about the geology of the County and to publicise the Group's activities, displays were presented at the Warwick Museum and Night event, the Stratford River Festival, at Upton House (working at a National Trust property for the first time) and at Astley Castle (with the Landmark Trust). It is policy to try to use different locations each year so as to contact as many people as possible. As well as photographic and specimen displays the Outreach Group has developed an increasing variety of "fun" (and learning) activities for children and adults.

External Relations:

In the course of the year members of the Group have assisted other local organisations with their public education programmes by giving talks or leading field excursions.

A Local Nature Partnership for Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull has been established in partnership with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (WWT), amongst other organizations. Progress of LNPs is slow due to funding problems but the cooperation has led to a closer working relationship with WWT. Practical outcomes of this are (i) joint work on the design and construction of a geology wall in its Education Garden, with this year's activity concentrating on collecting the stone with the cooperation of quarry owners and local land owners, (ii) providing geological expertise for the WWT's Princethorpe and Tame Valley projects and (iii) joint work on a new public interpretation of a reserve in an abandoned limestone quarry.

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Conservation Programme:

WGCG now has designated over 90 Local Geological Sites (LGS) in the County. The need to discover and designate further sites is now a lower priority and so none have been designated this year. However, the rotational monitoring of the condition of our Local Sites has continued in the current year with each site being visited at least every five years. This activity also forms one of the components of the Group's mentoring policy with members receiving supervision and instruction in the application of the agreed criteria. The information is also fed into Warwickshire County Council's Single Data List and is also provided to Natural England in support of their construction of a national database of geologically designated sites. There have also been consultations about engineering works on railway cuttings, both active and abandoned, on the extension proposed at a diorite quarry and on a landfill site in a sandstone quarry both in north Warwickshire, as well as on a proposed housing development in Stratford District.

As a member of the Geology Trusts the Group has cooperated on conservation matters with other county geology groups in the West Midlands and further afield. Through this organisation it contributes to national environmental policy development. It is gratifying that the Group is being increasingly seen as a source of geological and geoconservation expertise.

The organisation's policy on reserves

In the charity's Reserves Policy, the purpose of the reserve is:

- to ensure continuity of services and benefits to members during lean times
- to contain shortfalls in current income to meet overhead costs and unforeseen setbacks
- to prepare funding bids for new projects
- to set aside a separate reserve of 'unrestricted' funds to finance grant-aided projects where expense claims are reimbursed in arrears by funding agencies
- to aid strategic planning to sustain and develop future activities to fund initiatives and to take advantage of new opportunities

Signed on behalf of the committee members:

Signed

(Chair) Date:

Independent examiner's report to the committee members of Warwickshire Geological Conservation Group for the year ended 31 August 2014

I report on the accounts of the charity, which are set out on pages seven to nine.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

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

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commissioners. 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 you as 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:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect that the requirements have not been met viz. –
 - to keep records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed _____ Date _____
Nigel Grounds, Mercia Community Accounting