



The Jurassic Coast Trust Chairman's Report 2015

This has been a very busy year for the Jurassic Coast Trust with the Growing the Jurassic Community Project in full swing and with it perhaps the level of our future success. Whilst undertaking this, we have had a number of changes in trustees and have also considered, in some detail, the future for the Jurassic Coast and how the Trust might be involved as a consequence of the Partnership's Options Appraisal. This, in turn, has led to us looking at ourselves to ensure that we are not only fit for our current purpose, but to consider what the future might bring and our aspirations for the Trust and the Jurassic Coast itself.

Navitus Bay, the proposal for a wind park off the Dorset Coast, created an unwelcome diversion during the last and previous years bringing with it considerable additional work, particularly for Sam Rose and his team. We are delighted with the recent decision by the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change to refuse the application. These proposals led to some considerable discussion within the Trust, which were, at times, somewhat challenging. I am pleased that we were able to fully support the Steering Group and the Jurassic Coast Team in their representations, resulting in what I would consider to be the correct decision.

Guy Kerr joined us just before our last AGM and under the direction of Alex O'Dwyer has made a considerable impact on the Trust's visibility, community engagement and establishing partnerships with a number of businesses. Business Partners have almost doubled in the last 12 months to 32. We now have 33 ambassadors, 131 volunteers and have increased friends by nearly 1,000 to 3,221.

Alex and Guy have developed a number of successful initiatives, including Go Jurassic Rangers of which we now have 124 and the Love the Jurassic Coast campaign. I suspect a number present never expected to appear in a video on Facebook, including myself.

I will not dwell on this work, as we will have a presentation from them later this morning, other than to express our gratitude for the work undertaken by our mounting band of ambassadors and volunteers; there is no doubt that without them, we would not have achieved what we have done over the last 12 months.

We welcome Caroline Pearce who joined us in May as our administrator and she has certainly freed up some time for Guy to concentrate on engagement, rather than paper-pushing and has proven to be an excellent addition to our team.

This year, both Alex and Guy presented at the Jurassic Coast Annual Seminar and successfully expressed our commitment and aspirations for engagement along the length of the World Heritage Site, the success of which is illustrated in our growing cohorts of ambassadors and volunteers eager to become more involved.



The benefits of this engagement has been exemplified by a greater and more successful presence at events such as the Lyme Regis Fossil Festival, which we would hope to continue to support, perhaps to a greater extent in the future.

Funding for Growing the Jurassic Community primarily comes from a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund with smaller contributions received from the Wates Family Foundation, Dorset County Council and the Jurassic Coast Team. We anticipate that we will comfortably meet our declared targets and hope that the income growth achieved will allow us to continue with this project when the grant funding comes to an end in 2016.

Our total income for the year ending 31st March increased to £97,239 with total expenditure of £60,618.

Project support during the year totalled £32,599, including Durlston Castle (£5,635), Creative Coast & the Coastal Erosion Project (£6,620), Beach Care (£1,684), the Mini Guide (£8,645), the Travelling Exhibition (£3,640), Big Jurassic Classroom (£2,875), the Lyme Regis Fossil Festival (£2,000) and the Charmouth Fossil Warden (£1,500) with £17,579 expended on the Community Project.

Seaton Jurassic is now forging ahead with an opening planned for early next year. An important addition to the Jurassic Coast's visitor centres to which the Trust has committed £10,000.

Grants were received from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Fine Foundation, the Wates Family Foundation, the Youth Hostel Association, the Jurassic Coast Team and \$5,000 from Cell Signalling Technology, a US company with a CSR programme supporting a variety of charitable organisations; The Jurassic Coast was included in their 2015 Nature Calendar, Protected Landscapes.

The Jurassic Coast Partnership has declared support for both Isle of Portland Projects, MEMO and Jurassica, although there remains some concern about the concentration of grant funding that might be directed towards Portland in the longer term and the effects that this may have for grant aid on other parts of the Jurassic Coast. We were delighted that the Dorset County Museum were successful with their HLF bid earlier this year.

Notable contributions under the Business Partner Scheme were received from West Dorset Leisure Holidays (£6,177), Dorset Coastal Cottages (£3,298) and the Weymouth Sealife Tower (£2,261).

Our non-grant income, one measure of our growth, increased by 57% to £29,622, which we expect to continue to grow significantly in the current year with an increasing number of Business Partners.

The Mary Anning Fund stands at £3,738, a small increase of £430. This is an allocated fund specifically for the purchase and conservation of Fossils, although our current resources do not allow us to progress this at the present time. In spite of this, we consider this to be an important aspect of our work for the future and we will continue to slowly build these financial resources.

At the end of March our total funds stood at £124,611, £67,207 of which was unrestricted.



I can confirm that the returns required by Entrust, Companies House and the Charity Commission were all submitted by the prescribed dates.

Sarah Hough at Edwards & Keeping has taken on a much more regular involvement in our accounts, undertaking all our book-keeping and preparing reports for both Trustee and Management Group meetings. This together with the engagement of Caroline Pearce has allowed us to improve our financial management and although there are still improvements and changes to be put in place, this has resulted in much clearer accountability and budgeting.

I would like to thank Rupert Edwards, Sarah Hough and their partners at Edwards & Keeping for their continuing commitment to the Trust and the very generous basis on which they charge for the work they undertake on our behalf; it would not be possible without them.

Our publications have continued to provide valuable income for the Trust at £12,714, an increase on the previous year, although the numbers of books sold was slightly down at 9,547. We intend to review our policy towards our books for the future and whilst Coastal Publications have enabled us to publish considerably more books than would otherwise have been possible in the early years of the Trust, we do consider that there are opportunities to increase our overall revenue from this source. The educational content of books is important and we will continue to consider the publication of books that make an important contribution to the understanding of the Jurassic Coast, albeit that they may not be as commercially successful as others.

The Fossil Book will be the first publication on such a revised basis. Sam Scriven, Denys Brunsten and others have continued to work on finalising the content, with only the sourcing of good images remaining. I am very pleased to report that the Petroleum Exploration Society of Great Britain has recently agreed to grant £10,000 for the Fossil Book, which together with the £5,000 already donated by the Alice Ellen Cooper-Dean Charitable Foundation now provides the funding we need.

A Mighty Tale, the film, was, with the support of Sybil King, converted into a successful book, a copy of which I trust you have all bought.

The ammonite badges have continued their contribution to our income amounting to nearly £4,000 in the year ending 31st March and I am delighted to report that the best venue has been the Heritage Centre at Lulworth Cove.

The Trust's Management Group, chaired by Alex O'Dwyer, continues to ensure the business of the Trust progresses efficiently and effectively between Trustee meetings and this remains an important part of our management structure since our review in 2011. Those trustees involved, Mike Lickiss, Jeremy Pope, John Wokersien and of course Alex, consequently commit even more of their time to the Trust, for which we are all very appreciative. I would particularly wish to thank Rupert Edwards who despite his forced resignation as a trustee because of a change in his professional regulations, continues his indispensable contribution to our management and continues to provide his office as a venue for the Group.



I regret to report that a number of trustees have resigned during the last year owing to other commitments; David Andrew, Malcolm Turnbull and Lisa Drewe. All three have made very significant contributions to the Trust, Lisa latterly, particularly in the forming of our vision and mission for the future. Dave and Malcolm were involved with the preparation of the original nomination for a World Heritage Site and were both founding members of the Trust. We shall certainly miss their contribution and experience.

We have interviewed a number of possible trustees, but only one was considered suitable and John Wokersien was welcomed as a new trustee earlier this year. John has been involved with the Jurassic Coast for a number of years, is a tireless advocate for East Devon and has undoubtedly brought new enthusiasm for our work, his impact being felt almost immediately, particularly with our deliberations for the future.

The discussions among the Jurassic Coast Partnership about the options for the future has made it more difficult to recruit trustees as those skills required for an amalgamated single organisation would be very different to the Trust continuing as we have thus far. The only possible exception to this is someone to champion our commercial work, particularly publications and the search continues for a suitable candidate.

Our links with the Jurassic Coast Team continue to grow and I have to thank Sam Rose and his Team for their immense contribution in helping the Trust over the last 12 months and for the extremely important role they fulfil for the Jurassic Coast. We are looking forward to the new website, now in the latter stages of development by the Team, which will align the Trust much more closely with the work of the Team and the Jurassic Coast.

The Counties continue their very welcome support of the Trust, not only by way of Councillors Stuart Hughes and Hilary Cox as trustees, but also the very helpful and relevant advice offered by Peter Moore and Phil Sterling.

My thanks to all our trustees who remain completely committed to the Trust, giving up a significant amount of time to manage, expand our aspirations and explore what the future might hold for both the Trust and the Jurassic Coast.

In my last report, I mentioned the increasing difficulties with public sector budgets. There is a growing need for us all to consider how the Jurassic Coast might be able to benefit from the work done by the Steering Group, Team, Trust and others, the Jurassic Coast Partnership, and what the future might look like if we were able to bring all these together into a single coherent body.

The Options Appraisal prepared by the Partnership Management Group was considered by the Trust in June, particularly the preferred option whereby the Trust, possibly in a slightly different form, would assume the management role for the World heritage Site supported by a Policy Committee to provide expert advice and with the benefit of a Service Level Agreement with the Counties relating to those areas regarded as core functions of the Authorities or those which they had a moral, if not legal duty to provide.



The Trust after some discussion and deliberation accepted the principle of this preferred option, subject to the detail, and discussions have begun with the Counties and the Steering Group to ascertain some common grounds on which this might be progressed. Some did express concern about our status as a charity and how such an amalgamation might affect both our charitable position and our independence. I believe that this issue, which must be protected, will depend on the detail of any agreement, but is certainly compatible with the Jurassic Coast Trust accepting such a role.

There remain some concerns about whether this is the best solution at this time, but it is equally clear that the opportunity to achieve a lasting structure will be quickly upon us and quickly lost. The next 12 months may prove to be critical, more so, I believe, than some think and the Trust remains eager to progress the opportunity presented to us, all of us involved with the Jurassic Coast, to ensure the long term resilience of its management and future protection.

We have to be ambitious in our objectives and aspirations if we are to realise all that the Jurassic Coast, still England's only natural World Heritage Site, could contribute, not only to the wider understanding of our planet's history, but also the prosperity of Dorset & East Devon.

James Weld
Chairman, Jurassic Coast Trust
15th September 2015