



Trustees' Annual Report for the period



		Period start date			Period end date		
From	01	12	2020	To	30	11	2021

Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name

River Lark Catchment Partnership

Other names charity is known by

Registered charity number (if any)

1177318

Charity's principal address

24, Northgate Avenue

Bury St Edmunds

Suffolk

Postcode

IP32 6BB

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	James Stephens	Treasurer		
2	Andrew Hinchley	Chairman		
3	William Cranstoun			Suffolk Wildlife Trust
4	Chris Gregory			
5	David Palmer			Lark Valley Association
6	James Meadows			Lark Angling and Preservation Society
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Names of the trustees for the charity, if any, (for example, any custodian trustees)

Name	Dates acted if not for whole year

Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

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Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's trusts

CIO Association Constitution
Association
Elected by members

Additional governance issues (Optional information)

Our trustees are nominated and elected directly by our membership and we ensure that trustees are practitioners who bring a full set of competencies for our board to be effective. In this our third year as a registered charity, we continuously had six trustees serving on our board. Our constitution allows for a maximum of twelve trustees and our policy is to continue to attract nominees to add to the board to enhance the good governance and functioning of the charity. We also enjoy the strong support of the Cam and Ely Ouse Catchment Partnership within which the Lark Partnership is a sub-catchment.

We have formally adopted an array of policies covering:-

- risk management
- volunteer management
- safeguarding
- complaints handling
- managing conflict of interest
- ensuring equality

Section C Objectives and activities

To conserve, preserve and improve the River Lark and its catchment area for the benefit the public, in particular but not exclusively by:

- (i) Improving access and encouraging the appropriate use of the River and its environs by members of the public.
- (ii) Educating the public about the River and its environs
- (iii) Facilitating community involvement in the conservation of the River
- (iv) Monitoring the River & its catchment and reporting any issues or concerns to the appropriate bodies having statutory responsibility.

The Trustees of RLCP actively engage in the formulation of the charity's annual action plan and in so doing ensure that they have due regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance. The Trustees constantly reviewed the annual work plan as it was underway for 2021.

The continuing global COVID pandemic has inevitably impacted heavily on our charity's pursuits in 2021. The trustees have ensured as a first interest that all its activities have been undertaken within the Government's instructions and guidelines.

Building community-based organisation to deliver River conservation:

The conservation activities we aspire to be in line with the charity's objectives require us to develop an effective linked community organisation along the full extent of the river. We intend to do this progressively over the next few years. In 2021 we were able to progress our river restoration activities through the Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme (BFER) and Water Environment Improvement Fund (WEIF, EA) albeit on a limited scope due to the Covid restrictions and the understandable concerns our volunteers had about the impact of the virus on our river. We successfully launched our Modular River Survey (MoRPh) programme for the Lark with training and setting up our volunteer schedules. The Modular River Survey enables river enthusiasts and citizen scientists to get involved with recording and assessing physical habitat and hydromorphological functioning in their local rivers and streams. We will use MoRPh to monitor our river restoration progress through BFER and WEIF.

A Pollution Action Plan for the River Lark:

In 2021 RLCP has established a pollution action plan for the River Lark through intense collaboration with partners and stakeholders and meetings hosted by our MP Jo Churchill. This action plan will direct our activities and inform Anglian Water, the Environment Agency and others going forward.

The RLCP Water for Tomorrow project:

In September 2021 RLCP was grant funded a project to deliver services for enhancing:-

- Shared river abstraction and water management by farm businesses in the Lark
- Communication and Engagement to develop RLCP Catchment Water Management attributes.

This project will fund an array of water management and citizen science activities from September 2021 to April 2023.

The River Lark is a sub-catchment of the Cam and Ely-Ouse catchment (Cam EO). Throughout the year we have participated in the regular CamEO 'collaboration and engagement' meetings which have been continued by remote technology during Covid restrictions.

River restoration projects in 2021:

The year's river restoration works programme within the Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme (BFER) was blighted by the Covid restrictions in 2021 with the lockdown from the start of the year through to May effectively wiping out our main period for the year for these activities. Despite this we still managed to carry out initial works at Flempton Bridge with three very restricted work parties in April and May.



Setting about restoring the river bank downstream of Flempton Bridge in April

The picture was brighter later on in the year as we emerged from Covid restrictions and we were able to carry out very effective works with restricted volunteer work parties at West Stow in collaboration with Bury Trout Club and at Fullers Mill.



A beautiful autumn day at West Stow

A big feature of the year's progress was the big floods we had in December and January which were events we experience every decade or so.



The River Lark at the Old Abbey Bridge in January 2022



The Lark near Lackford in December 2020

The floods had an impressive impact on the river and it was very interesting to see how well our restoration works stood up, particularly at Fullers Mill. We were able to go back to Fullers Mill in the autumn to take stock of the progress and improve on our hard work carried out before the Covid pandemic and the floods struck



The river at Fullers Mill later in 2021 re-establishing the brush island

In July we carried out our annual basic River Restoration training at the outdoors venue at West Stow Country Park. The training was over two sessions for twelve volunteers.



Outdoor training (Covid safe) at West Stow

In 2021 we set up our Modular River Survey (MoRPh) programme which will bench mark and monitor our progress through BFER and beyond. Nine additional volunteers have now been trained in MoRPh.

River Lark Pollution Review and Action Plan

At the start of our year from 1st December 2020 we committed to a broad ranging partnership enquiry into the state of the River Lark's pollution and set about establishing an Action Plan (AP) to improve the state of the river. This initiative has been supported strongly by Anglian Water and the Environment Agency and has been mentored by Bury St Edmunds MP Jo Churchill. By April 2021 we had established the AP founded on two excellent documents (<http://riverlark.org.uk/index.php/reports-and-documents/>), a status report on the condition of the Lark's catchment and a review of the priorities and investment initiatives underway in the within the regulatory framework and beyond.

The thrust of partnership delivery into the action plan through RLCP's coordination and leadership continues to be through periodic 'round table' virtual meetings called by Jo Churchill MP's Constituency Office.

Progress was made during 2021 on clarifying specific issues surrounding Anglian Water's current Water Environment Investment Programme (WINEP) and the potential for improving future WINEPs with a more participatory approach. Anglian Water has now declared the Lark to be one of its flagship chalk streams which will attract further much needed investment in the health of our river.

RLCP will continue to vigorously pursue the action plan with all partners concerned going forward.

RLCP Water for Tomorrow Project

Water for Tomorrow is a new €4m EU Interreg France (Channel) England cross-border project, with pilot water catchments in East Anglia. In September 2021 we were given a £30k grant to pursue the following WfT objectives in our catchment between September 2021 and April 2023.

Activity 1 – River Lark Abstraction Water Sharing Pilot Implementation

This project will support the Lark Abstraction Group in their water sharing pilot implementation. Resources are required to (i) support the formal legal establishment of a co-operative entity to represent the interests of the farming businesses involved, and (ii) to commission Cranfield University to undertake further applied research to provide relevant robust evidence needed to underpin future investment in the water sharing approach and infrastructure development.

Activity 2 - Communication and Engagement to develop RLCP Catchment Water Management attributes**1. Catchment Water Balance**

The intention of this activity is to develop a CaBA Catchment Water Balance tool for RLCP to share with its stakeholders with the collaboration of EA.

The technical basis for this will be: (i) detailed review of the Lark baseflow hydrology, identifying significant uncertainties; (ii) any necessary follow up desk and fieldwork (eg flow gauging of Culford stream) to remove uncertainties; (iii) in collaboration with EA, calibrating the Lark baseflows with the available EA gw models; (iv) refining the catchment water balance for prospective groundwater and surface water abstraction management (with particular regard to droughts). In parallel with this work RLCP will: (a) Establish an RLCP stakeholders water management forum; (b) Engage with catchment water users, environmental stakeholders and wider interest parties to foster a CaBA water resources management approach.

2. Lark Catchment Pollution Action Plan delivery

The aim of this activity is for RLCP to take forward the Lark Catchment Pollution Action Plan by informing the relevant partners and stakeholders of the need for action, and enlisting and gaining commitment from partners to deliver on the actions.

3. Stakeholder Engagement for CaBA Citizen Science Water Monitoring

RLCP will mobilise volunteers in citizen science pursuits to deliver the CaBA activities in support of the Lark Action Plan and the Catchment Water balance initiative.

Catchment collaboration and engagement events in 2021:

RLCP is a sub-catchment partner of the Cam and Ely Ouse (CamEO) catchment partnership which is hosted by the Rivers Trust and Anglian Water. In 2021 we attended all the CamEO collaboration and engagement meetings, most of which were organised as remote (zoom) meetings due to Covid restrictions.

Section E Financial review

For 2021 the charity does not have a reserves policy and does not hold funds in reserve. This will be actively reviewed in 2022 together with considerations about any necessary decisions to have funds in reserve.

The charity registers Receipts & Payments accounts. No funds were materially in deficit in 2021.

Further financial review details (Optional information)

In 2021 The charity received grant funds from the following donors:

- Environment Agency, Water Environment Improvement Fund (WEIF)
- Water for Tomorrow Fund administered by The Rivers Trust
- Heritage Lottery Funds through the Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers Landscape Partnership (BFER)

Grant funded expenditure has supported our Lark River restoration, abstraction pilot, pollution action plan and citizen science monitoring efforts, and our outreach campaigns.

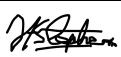
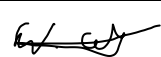
Section F Other optional information

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Section G Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	James Stephens	William Cranstoun
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Treasurer, Trustee	Trustee
Date	29/04/2022	