



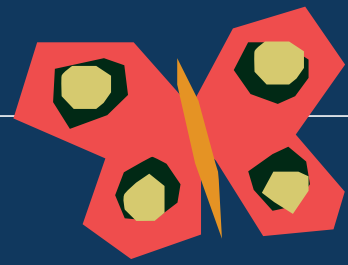
For people and planet

Annual Report 2023/24

Wonderseekers



Registered Charity No. 294582
Registered Company No. 02014929



Our promise to children

We know great partnerships are built on trust. Our partnership with our beneficiaries, the children we engage and work with, is crucially important. We live by our values but to help demonstrate this to children, we've set out the following promises, especially for them. They also help communicate our ethical principles to our partners, supporters and funders.

1

We promise to always put your safety and wellbeing first.

2

We promise to do our best to make you feel welcome and valued.

3

We promise to share lots of different stories about the world around us, including yours.

4

We promise to run Wonderseekers with you.

5

We promise to take good care of anything you share with us.

6

We promise to explore science together, in ways that make sense to you.

7

We promise to do our best for the planet.

8

We promise to create opportunities for you to make a difference.

9

We promise to work with organisations that have both yours and the planet's best interests at heart.

10

We promise to be honest about our mistakes and learn from them.

These promises to children, along with our legal duty, guide our behaviour.

They help us to make decisions that are right for you, for our Charity and for our world.



Report of the Trustees and strategic report

The Board of Trustees is pleased to present their annual Trustees' report together with consolidated financial statements of the Charity and its trading subsidiary for the year ending 31st March 2024.

The report is prepared to meet the requirements for a directors' report and accounts for Companies Act purposes. The Trustees' report and financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: 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 (FRS 102).

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Wonderseekers is pleased to welcome Janet Owen to the team as Chair of Trustees

Dr Janet Owen is a cultural professional with over 30 years of experience in connecting heritage, arts and science sectors. She holds an MA in Archaeology and Anthropology from the University of Cambridge. Janet's career includes management, executive and non-executive positions at regional and national museums and visitor attractions. Janet brings organisational transformation expertise and is excited to support the wider team in delivering Wonderseekers' powerful ambition.

Janet said: "Wonderseekers has not only great ambitions but important ambitions for today's society. The impact that Wonderseekers already has is hugely significant and important in the world we live in today. I have seen the charity develop from a distance, build in confidence, and take flight. I am thrilled to have joined the team on this journey and to contribute to a Charity that already does so much to support children and has ambition and opportunity to do more for so many more children."



Chair and CEO welcome

Welcome to Wonderseekers' 2023/24 Annual Report. We are delighted to share with you the year's achievements and our exciting and substantial plans for the years to come.

The first year of our strategy For People and Planet 2030 has lived up to our team's high expectations and proved to be a landmark year for our Charity, thanks to a significant donation from longstanding corporate supporter, Arqiva. Twenty-five years after donating the original site, upon which Winchester Science Centre was built, Arqiva has gifted Wonderseekers a 125-year lease for eight acres of rare and precious chalk grassland directly adjacent to our site, in the South Downs National Park.

Securing this threatened landscape surrounding our Science Centre is a major step to diversifying our science engagement and expanding our expertise. In partnership with children, scientists, conservationists and communities, we will empower children with the skills and agency to take collective action to protect and heal the planet.

We are grateful to all those who have contributed to the development of our future plans, particularly those who have joined us in a voluntary capacity through our Project Advisory Board and Young Steering Group. We are hugely encouraged by the conversations we have had with funders and stakeholders who have shown significant interest in and support for our plans. We very much look forward to sharing further details and the progress we make through our website and blog. Please look online and join us on our journey.

We are hugely proud of all those who help Wonderseekers to support children through science engagement. Our ability to ignite and sustain children's curiosity through science is one of our greatest strengths, and being able to collaborate with others makes our impact all the greater.

This year, we are pleased to have established new partnerships with priority audiences, universities, and regional charities and organisations that share our values and aims. These have included externally funded projects aimed at engaging underrepresented audiences with science

research in innovative and equitable ways. Our partners this year have included the Institute of Sustainability at University of Surrey, University of Southampton, Butterfly Conservation, schools and community partners. Our Equity, Community Engagement and Outreach Team has extended our Charity's reach into communities enabling 14,153 people to engage in science and nature in their own schools and community spaces.

Our Science Centre has continued to thrive this year. The investment made in 2022/23 in our teams has enabled us to increase our out-of-hours events programme and expand our schools and public offer. To support greater access to our Science Centre, we introduced an advance booking discount and continued to provide free access to foster families and personal assistants/carers. In total, Wonderseekers engaged over 170k people, through Winchester Science Centre's public, schools and events programmes. We are enormously grateful to all our staff, volunteers, partners and supporters who have made this activity possible.

Our strategy has really focused our attention on our own sustainability. Over the past year, we developed our Group Sustainability Strategy to expand on the pledge we made to use our spaces, experiences and voice to positively impact children and nature and to enable our teams to lead by example. We're delighted by the actions our staff have taken to reduce our environmental footprint, but to meet our sustainability targets we must be bold. This is why we have taken the decision to create a new designated reserve for capital investment in sustainability and infrastructure improvements. We hope to use these funds to leverage greater support to meet our sustainability goals and positively contribute to regional strategies.

We have bold ambitions for Wonderseekers and are excited to be working together with the trustees and the Senior Leadership Team to deliver on our strategy and future plans.

We look forward to sharing our progress, impact and learning openly and honestly, with support and guidance from external evaluators.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank our funders, partners and our own teams, staff and volunteers, for the difference you make to children's lives. Thank you.



Wonderseekers has not only great ambitions but important ambitions for today's society.

The impact that Wonderseekers already has is hugely significant and important in the world we live in today. I have seen the charity develop from a distance, build in confidence, and take flight.



Janet Owen
Chair of Trustees



Ben Ward
FRSA
Chief Executive Officer



Dr. Janet Owen
FRSA, AMA, MA (Cantab), MA
Chair of Trustees



Charity impact

Our Charity has been focused on engaging young people in science since it was founded in 1986. Our delivery has evolved over the decades, with a focus now on making science accessible and fun to children at a young age. But why?

Originally, emphasis was placed on science and technology career pathways, and for many organisations this is still their primary focus. But for Wonderseekers, we're on a mission to create more equitable access to science and nature so that all children can participate, especially those within our priority audiences - children and families who are underserved due to low socio-economic opportunities, disability, impairment or illness.

Through a diverse, accessible and inclusive mix of science experiences, our Charity is a catalyst for change. Fun, positive, people-led activities at our Science Centre, in schools, communities and online, are central to getting children and their families engaged in science and its relevance to the world we live in.

Some of the ways we've overcome barriers to engagement:

- We take science and nature experiences into schools and community spaces, reaching children and families who have limited opportunity to engage. Our priority communities are Winnall (Winchester), Leigh Park (Havant), the City of Southampton and Rushmoor (Aldershot & Farnborough).
- We invest in accessibility enhancements to improve physical and sensory access to our Science Centre, workshops and community programmes. This includes everything from recruitment to staff training, interactive exhibits to website design, accessible interpretation, social stories and sensory backpacks to subsidised pricing for schools and free admission for personal assistants and foster families.
- We seek to run our Charity with children, particularly those from priority audiences. We do this through our Young Steering Group, Young Design Panel and through partnerships, such as the ones we have with Shepherd's Down School, which is a SEN school, and regional Young Carer groups.



The difference our Charity can make is demonstrated through our theory of change.

By doing this:

- Speaking up for early intervention, equality, diversity and inclusion and the environment in science
- Creating, curating and sharing digital resources and experiences
- Connecting children to nature through environmental science, outdoor spaces and our activity programme
- Providing accessible, fun and diverse science experiences through our Science Centre
- Extending activity through schools and community-based programmes to deliver equitable access to science

And by working with:

Schools ↔ Families ↔ Communities ↔ Partners

We will be the catalyst for change through:

- Sustained, repeated and diverse science engagement from an early age
- Fun, positive, people-led and participatory activities
- Accessible and inclusive experiences, where children feel welcome and valued
- Continuous evaluation

To achieve these outcomes:

- Children are connected to nature
- Children use their science enquiry skills
- Children want to play their part
- Children value and see the relevance of science

And long-term impacts:

- Children can and want to protect and heal our natural world
- Children choose to live healthier lives
- Children can live in a more equitable society
- Children choose to contribute to a better world for all

Our Charity's impact is reflected in the value that we add and the difference we make to children's engagement with science, personal development and growth.

Our numbers for 2023/24 paint a vibrant picture:

115,402

Up 8.4%
on last year

public visitors to Winchester Science Centre.

Children and their families, friends, peers and community groups who visited in their leisure time.

This number includes 1,314 foster family members (up 16.6% on previous year) and 3,332 carers/personal assistants (up 21.6% on previous year).

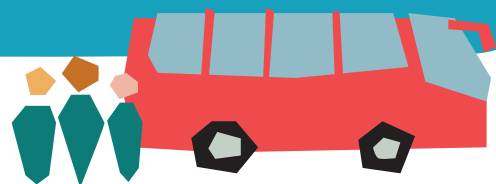


42,764

Up 11.2%
on last year

educational visitors to Winchester Science Centre.

Children and their accompanying adults who visited as part of a school trip, SEN school or group visit, or home education visit.





14,153

Up 48.5%
on last year

people engaged through our Equity, Community Engagement and Outreach programme.

Children and their families we have engaged in their school and community spaces.



12,654

people visited Winchester Science Centre for a special event.

Children and adults who attended out-of-hours events and our Cosmic Christmas daytime experience.



Strategy

Our strategy For People and Planet 2030 is our North Star.

It gives us clear, long-term direction and ensures we're all working together to achieve the same aims. It stands on the shoulders of our previous strategy, building on the step change we made in making science engagement inclusive and accessible to now champion equity. It also promises to lead by example on environmental sustainability, to use our spaces, experiences and voice to help children respond to climate change and biodiversity loss and empower collective action for the benefit of people and the planet.







Vision

A world where, through the wonder of science, people and planet thrive.

Mission

To create a more equitable world where all children can treasure science and are equipped and empowered to improve lives and protect and heal our planet.

Values

					
Inclusive	For the planet	Bold	Fun	Open and honest	Collaborative

Outcomes

Children are connected to nature	Children use their science enquiry skills	Children want to play their part	Children value and see the relevance of science
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Objectives

Diversify our reach and grow impact	Champion equality, diversity and inclusion in science	Work long-term with children who need our support the most	Protect and heal our planet and inspire others to do the same
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Key themes

Be the change

Respect. Protect. Action.



Objectives, achievements and performance

1

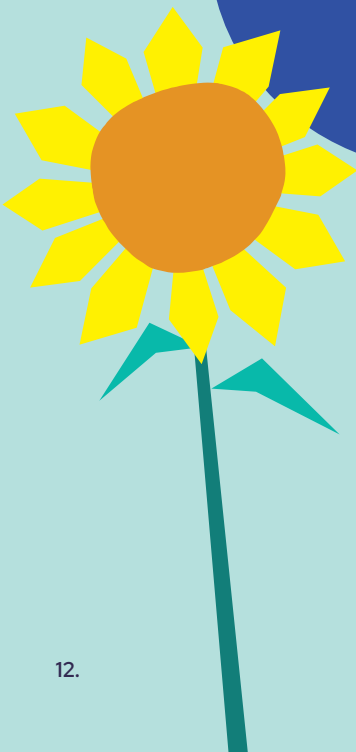


Diversify our reach and grow impact

We launched our strategy, For People and Planet 2030, in February 2023, and couldn't wait to get started.

In this first year, our teams have responded with gusto. Existing programmes and activities across all channels were audited, reviewed and adjusted in line with our new values and objectives. Our pledge to use our spaces, experiences and voice to positively engage children, through science, with the natural world and to take action against climate change, has developed into a group sustainability strategy, a Charity-wide development project (our masterplan) and a project-specific interpretation strategy. This activity, some of which has already been put in place, will diversify and grow our audiences, expand our science and nature engagement and deliver the outcomes we want for children and nature.

Having shared and tested our plans with stakeholders, the important and urgent role we know we must play is recognised by others and supported. Examples of action we've already taken are included throughout the report and details of our future plans can be found on pages 34 and 35.

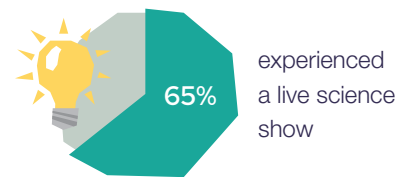
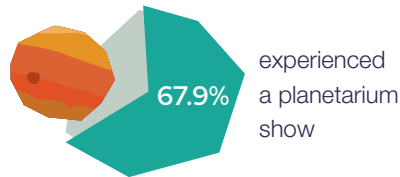
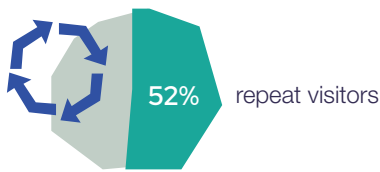


Science for families

Winchester Science Centre offers an exciting and dynamic science experience for children aged three to 12 and their families.

In addition to two floors of interactive exhibits, the team delivers a packed live science programme including wow demos in Science Live, seasonal live science shows and presenter-led planetarium shows. Visitors enjoy seasonal themes and enhanced activities every school holiday, encouraging repeat visits and added-value experiences for annual members. This dynamic programming has provided welcome opportunities for the team to expand the visitor experience outdoors and build environmental science into our public offer. We were delighted Winchester Science Centre was recognised at the 2023 Beautiful South Awards, with a bronze award for Large Visitor Attraction of the Year. This success is mirrored in our visitor feedback and increased engagement on the previous year.

115,402 family visitors, up 8.4% on previous year



The Science Centre experience is largely indoors so we see the greatest demand on cold and wet days and least demand on hot and sunny days. This year, average day visits from April to September increased by 16%, thanks in part, we believe, to the additional outdoor activities we were able to offer over the summer months.

Our ongoing online visitor survey is a valuable data gathering tool with a high response rate. Its primary purpose is to monitor the quality of our visitor offer and pick out opportunities to improve. This year among the open-ended answers we were also able to identify evidence for the value we add to the people who choose to visit our Science Centre. These include:

We create lasting impressions and provide opportunities for family conversations.

Our visitors often report that they still talk about the topics they engaged in during their visit. Even as one-off experiences, visits to the Science Centre spark family conversations and interactions.

We make positive childhood memories.

Winchester Science Centre holds a special place in childhood memories. In many open-ended responses, our visitors share how they regard their visit as quality family time spent, including a high number of responses from grandparents who cherish the engagement opportunities

We are a valued resource for people living locally.

We provide a unique resource for our local area which spans not only Winchester and Hampshire, but up to a 90-minute drive radius.



Science for schools

During term time, the Science Centre is open exclusively for educational visits from Mondays to Fridays, including school trips, SEN schools/groups and home education visits.

Despite the economic pressures being felt by schools and families, we're thrilled that we remain a highly valued and sought-after experience, with 11% growth in school visits from the previous year.

To support the Charity's expansion into environmental science, we launched our first biology-focused outdoor workshop, Marvellous Minibeasts, and created a nature calendar with external practitioner Dr Sarah Beachell, as a post-visit activity for schools. In partnership with Butterfly Conservation, schools have participated free-of-charge in Nature Day workshops on the adjacent Magdalen Hill Down nature reserve. These were great for the children but also provided valuable practical experience for our team in leading groups across this important chalk downland landscape.

42,764 educational visitors, up 11.2% on previous year

Partnership with



Teacher feedback

Having the folder was good for teachers, workshop very well run, planetarium show much improved, and the children love all the hands-on activities.

31st October 2023

Top quality provision for accessibility. Timings were good and appropriate.

10th November 2023

Brilliant space, well designed and accessible, and extremely child centric.

12th December 2023

Brilliant trip! Very interactive. So much to do for the children. They were engaged all day!

12th October 2023

Fantastic organisation. Children had the best time. Planetarium and workshops were great!

26th March 2024

Children really enjoyed the workshop. It gave them an opportunity to do something not possible in the classroom.

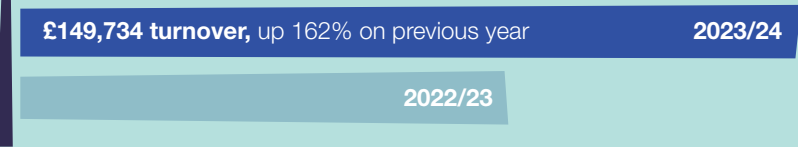
20th March 2024

Reaching new audiences through events

We relaunched our events programme in 2022/23, initially testing our enhanced daytime offer for families, a new Christmas experience and evening events for families and adults.

This year, we racked up a total of 94 in-house events, which included badge nights for uniformed groups, cinema screenings in the planetarium, guest presenter talks and shows, stargazing events, evenings for adults, Pink Floyd planetarium shows and welcomed the return of Santa and his intergalactic elf for Cosmic Christmas. We also hosted sleepovers, birthday parties and private hire events. The events programme supports our Charity's mission and contributes a valuable additional income stream for the Charity.

12,654 people attended an event at Winchester Science Centre



Objectives, achievements and performance

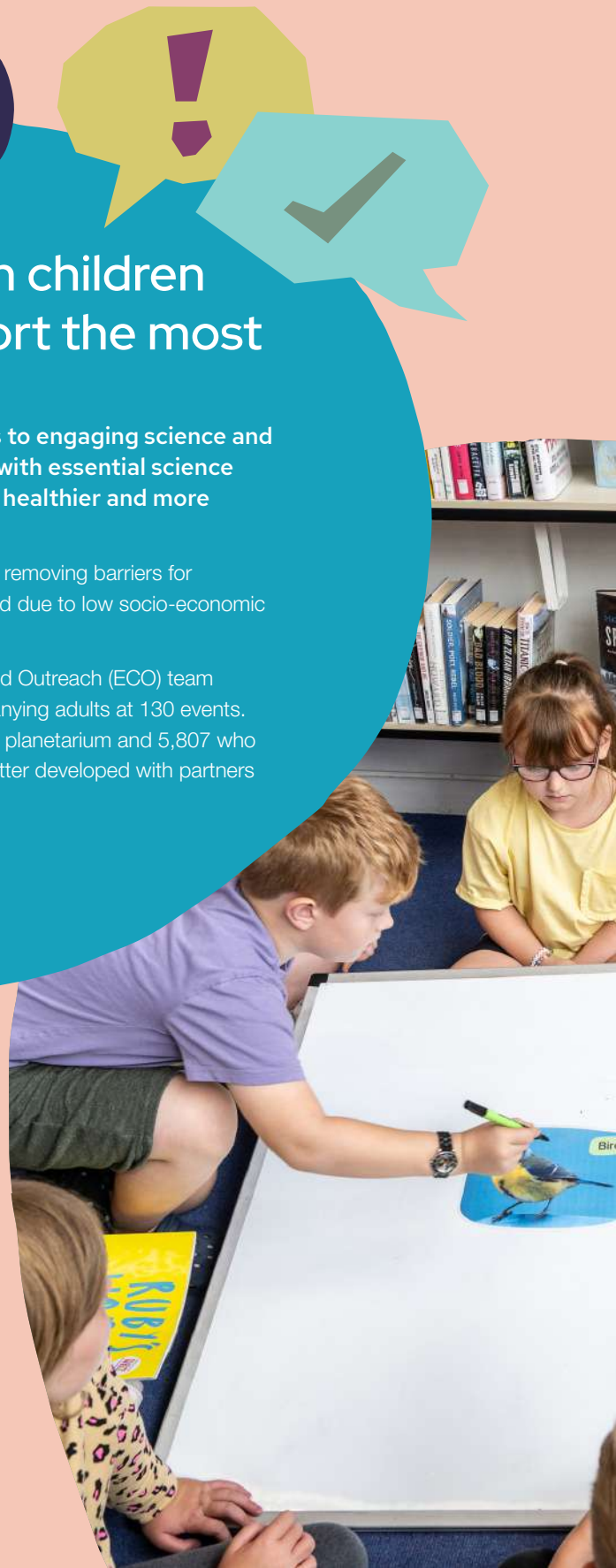
2

Work long-term with children who need our support the most

We believe that by giving children access to engaging science and nature experiences and equipping them with essential science enquiry skills, children can choose to live healthier and more sustainable lives.

That's why we continue to prioritise and invest in removing barriers for children, especially for those who are underserved due to low socio-economic opportunity, disability, impairment or illness.

This year our Equity, Community Engagement and Outreach (ECO) team engaged a total of 14,153 children and accompanying adults at 130 events. This included 8,346 who experienced our mobile planetarium and 5,807 who accessed free community-based activities, the latter developed with partners to ensure long-term, sustained engagement.



Taking science and nature experiences into schools and communities

Community-based engagement is central to our strategy, reaching families and schools who cannot and will not, for many reasons, visit our Science Centre.

Our free-at-point-of-access experiences are funded by Wonderseekers, grants and community partnerships. Priority is given to communities according to their IMD¹ score and proximity to Wonderseekers. This year, we are pleased to have supported Leigh Park in Havant, Newport on the Isle of Wight, Rushmoor, Southampton and Winnall in Winchester.

¹ The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is a measure of relative deprivation for small areas (Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)). It is a combined measure of deprivation based on a total of 37 separate indicators that have been grouped into seven domains, each of which reflects a different aspect of deprivation experienced by individuals living in an area.



Working in partnership with Leigh Park Library

We have forged a mutually beneficial partnership with Hampshire Library Service in Leigh Park, where library engagement has been low and school attainment is below the average for Hampshire.

Free interactive science and nature workshops were held regularly during school holidays and promoted exclusively in the local area.



Families in the area would not be able to get to the Winchester Science Centre independently so bringing the science workshops to them is invaluable.

For the library it has given us the opportunity to attract families into our spaces to see that libraries are for all and are a welcoming, safe, and free space.

Liz Weighell, Area Manager – East Libraries



Adding value to Hampshire's Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)

Wonderseekers began supporting the HAF programme in 2022/23.

This year, we took our mobile planetarium and microscope activities to children attending schemes at Nine Acres Primary School on the Isle of Wight, Stanmore Primary School in Winchester and Park Community School in Leigh Park. A total of 147 children engaged in science through this programme.



The activities delivered at the HAF schemes allowed the children to explore the universe, their local micro worlds and finally their own creativity, whilst talking to the Inspirers who acted as amazing and achievable role models for them.

Sharon Bartholomew, HAF Partnership Officer, Hampshire County Council



Repeat engagement programmes for schools

Nationally funded projects provide a great opportunity for us to take high impact repeat engagement programmes to schools in priority communities.

This year we ran two national programmes: COSMOS and Our World from Space. We took fun and accessible interactive workshops, engaging assemblies and our mobile planetarium into schools and community festivals, and supported teacher CPD.

These projects were made possible thanks to the Association of Science and Discovery Centres (ASDC), UK Space Agency (UKSA), Natural Environmental Research Council (NERC), Ondata Research Ltd and Horizon2020 funding from the European Commission.

We also developed our own repeat engagement programme Climate Trackers to support Rushmoor Borough Council's aim of increasing science engagement in their district.





Removing barriers to engagement at Winchester Science Centre

As a Charity we seek to overcome barriers for children to access science engagement.

We do this through our Science Centre by operating an admissions policy that supports families and schools in areas of low socio-economic opportunity and by providing multi-sensory, accessible activities and experiences.

We know that admission fees are a significant barrier for families and schools, especially those from our priority audiences/communities. We have had tiered pricing in place for schools since 2018, with up to 60% subsidy for schools with 17% or more children being eligible for free school meals (FSM). This year, in response to the cost-of-living crisis, we introduced an advance booking discount for families, an initiative that has supported 40% of family visitors. We have also provided free admission for foster families and visitors' carers/personal assistants.

When we introduced tiered pricing for schools in 2018, the national average of children receiving free school meals was 14%. In 2023/24, post-pandemic and with the cost-of-living crisis and inflation of over 10%, this is now 24.6% and a clear indication of increased social need. We resisted increasing the threshold for our FSM subsidy as the needs of these schools remain the same.

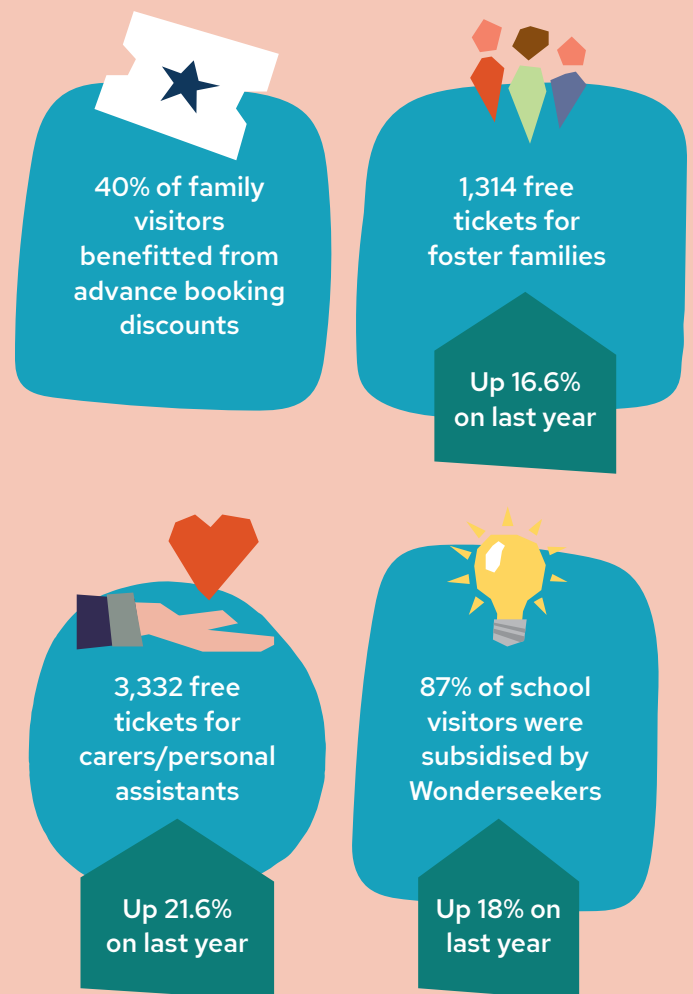
Our Equity, Community Engagement and Outreach Team champion accessibility by supporting continuous learning and improvement, including annual staff training and implementing accessibility improvements across our site and programmes.

This year, the team introduced 'Workshop on Wheels' boxes for all school workshops, offering an individual activity for children who feel unable to participate in a shared workshop experience. They've also developed new audio cues for all interactive exhibits, which will be available to access via discovery pens in late 2024, to provide greater independence for visually impaired and SEND visitors.

These developments build on our regular activity, such as home education and SEND days, BSL interpretation days, and daily not-so-noisy and subtitled shows. As well as special events to provide bespoke access for SEND groups.

This year we're pleased to have supported Hampshire Autistic Scouts, Autism Hampshire and Young Carers.

Despite our efforts to make the Science Centre accessible to all, the Science Centre's sole lift experienced a technical failure which resulted in it being out of service for 9 days. This presented a major barrier for visitors reliant on step-free access between our two floors. Our future plans will increase access and address ageing infrastructure.



We make a difference by being accessible and inclusive.

The accessibility of our experiences at Winchester Science Centre is the most positively commented on aspect of our offer in our post-visit survey.

We have a consistently higher-than-average percentage of visitors impacted by disability or impairment (19.43% in 2023/24). We continually monitor and ask for their feedback so that we can improve our offer and add value to their experience. We strive to cater for different needs and requirements as shown by the testimonials received:



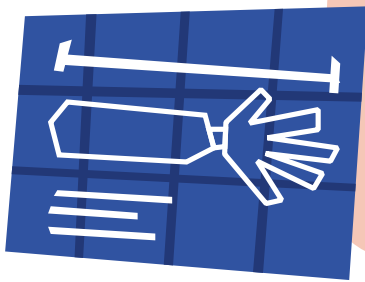
We were very impressed at how inclusive the centre was. Having a child with ASD/anxiety, your level of inclusiveness was probably the best we have ever experienced, including the pre-information about what to expect, ear defenders and recombination room if needed. Thank you

Parent

My daughter rarely ever fits into opportunities that others take for granted but felt that the science museum was perfect, the first thing we did was take her into the guitar to feel the vibrations, she has neurological dual sensory impairment and could have spent all day in there! I felt that she was included.

Parent





[My child is impacted by] profound disability, dual sensory impaired, wheelchair user...we felt 100% that she was a valued customer and made to feel so welcome, I loved how inclusive the displays were, explaining about the young girl with the prosthetics and printing your name in sign language for example

Parent



Objectives, achievements and performance

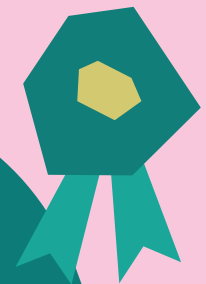
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Champion equity, diversity and inclusion in science

We champion equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in two ways.

Through our actions, we demonstrate our commitment to EDI, through our people and how we choose to run our Charity.

Through our communications, we have the opportunity to share our EDI experience, learning and impact to inform and influence the opinions and behaviours of others.



Our people

We're delighted to welcome two new recruits, to further our Charity's impact in EDI.

Daniella, our Communications Officer joined the team in January 2024, and Yvonne Rowland, who joined as a trustee in October 2023. Both were drawn to Wonderseekers because of the Charity's commitment to EDI and supporting children.



I feel very privileged to be in this position, telling the stories that deserve more public recognition. Because of my own lived experience as a person with a physical impairment who grew up being told "I would always struggle in school and not thrive academically" because of my disability, I know how important it is to see diversity represented fairly. I understand the value Wonderseekers can make to people's lives. At Wonderseekers, we listen to and involve children in our work. I know first-hand the difference a positive attitude makes to people's lives, especially children. I hope that my work will continue to advocate for children, showing them that anything is possible, and demonstrate to adults that there's so much to learn from children.

Daniella Ballard, Communications Officer



In response to our strategy, we've grown our Equity, Community Engagement and Outreach (ECO) Team, previously known as the Widening Participation Team, to support growth in community-based programmes, increase capacity to develop future plans and to advocate for EDI.

Staff regularly share Wonderseekers learning and experiences at conferences and events and bring EDI expertise to partnership working. This year, we presented at the Association for Science and Discovery Centres (ASDC) Conference, sharing our experience of co-working with children and artists to support science engagement. We presented a school workshop at STEM Learning's Primary Science CPD Conference, giving attendees first-hand experience and insight into Winchester Science Centre's award-winning schools offer. We took accessible science experiences to a family-focused science and conservation festival at Wildheart Animal Sanctuary, Isle of Wight, and supported the University of Southampton's science and engineering festival to increase access and engagement.

We were delighted to hear our reputation for accessible experiences had reached Australia, when the team from Scitech in Perth contacted us for advice on how to create accessible planetarium experiences. We were pleased to help but sadly, we didn't get to do a site visit!

We are proud to maintain our status as a Disability Confident (committed), Mindful and Age-friendly employer. This year, we updated our recruitment procedures and worked on improving access to office spaces for staff. Amongst our team we have mental health first aiders and an Autism Ambassador for Hampshire.

Equitable partnerships supporting children and nature.

In May 2023, Wonderseekers was selected to join the Mindsets + Missions learning and grants programme, funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

The aim of the programme was to support museums and science centres to engage underrepresented groups with knowledge, research and innovation. We successfully bid for an equitable partnership project 'Sound of Biodiversity', developed with the Institute of Sustainability, University of Surrey, and a primary school in one of our priority communities.

The project, which started in September 2023 and runs until July 2024, is a real step-change for partnership working, recognising the equally valuable contributions being made by each partner, in this case, scientific research, lived experience and science engagement expertise, as well as ensuring equitable outcomes and benefits. We are supported by evaluation consultant Jen DeWitt to evaluate the objectives, partnership relationships, and outcomes and impact on the children participating. We look forward to sharing our project case study following its completion.

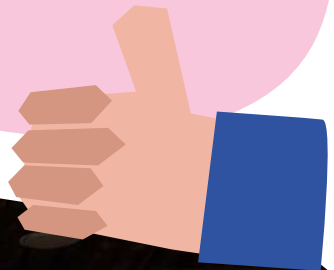
The Mindsets + Missions grants programme is coordinated by the Museums Association, Association for Science and Discovery Centres and The Liminal Space.



It has been a pleasure and wonderful experience collaborating with Wonderseekers on a public engagement project. Through our equal partnership, including a local school, I will have been able to disseminate my research into the health and wellbeing implications of soundscapes created from different urban and natural planning decisions, in an impactful and interesting way for children. In turn, I am learning what soundscapes are valuable for children, and the best methods to engage children in learning about the value of natural soundscapes.



*Dr Sarah Payne,
Senior Lecturer of Environmental Psychology,
and Sustainability Fellow and Programme
Lead of Nature-based solutions, Institute for
Sustainability,
University of Surrey*



Bold Futures – a co-creation project designed to capture and amplify children’s voices.

Children from Leigh Park, Havant, and Eastleigh Young Carers Project, two of Wonderseekers' priority audiences, got to see themselves on the big screen in The Planetarium, for the premiere of two short films, co-created by and starring the children.

The films, which address the children’s hopes and fears about climate change, now feature on the Science Centre’s main exhibition floor for all visitors to see and interact with.

Despite national research into eco-anxiety, little information exists, especially for young children. Through this project, we provided a safe and supportive space for children and families to discuss these challenging topics. Working with Artist and Scientist, Kay McCrann, children took part in mark making workshops to help them express their feelings about their local environment, explore their likes and dislikes about their outdoor spaces and create visions of their ideal green space. These sessions helped the children to create a visual narrative about how they felt. They then used this to start a conversation about climate change; what it means to them and what they can do in their local areas to help.

The films are a powerful legacy of this project but so is the impact of the project on the children who participated, as illustrated by this comment from one of the community leaders:



“We know that one of our most shy and quietest Young Carers, as a result of taking part in this workshop, is feeling more confident and feels able to speak up and express herself.”

Hayley Malcolm, One Community



This project was made possible thanks to funding from the Inspiring Science Fund, coordinated by the Association of Science and Discovery Centres, the Museums Association and The Liminal Space.



Objectives, achievements and performance

4

We'll protect and heal our planet and inspire others to do the same

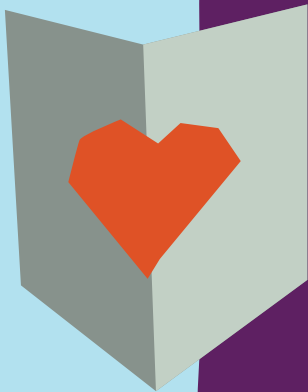
"The truth is, every one of us, no matter who we are or where we live, can and must play a part in restoring nature. It's easy to feel overwhelmed or powerless by the scale of the issues facing our planet, but we have the solutions. I am hopeful for the future, because although nature is in crisis, now is the time for action, and together we can save it."

David Attenborough, The Guardian, 13 March 2023

Wonderseekers is uniquely positioned to support children, through science and nature engagement, to respond to the climate and biodiversity emergencies we face.

In our strategy, we made a pledge to use our spaces, experiences and voice to engage children through all disciplines of science, with the natural world and to act against climate change. This year, we developed our Group Sustainability Strategy to set out our vision and goals for each of these three areas. The strategy, which has since been published, is available to view on our website, www.wonderseekers.charity/about-us/sustainability.

A summary of the action we have taken this year is included below.





Our spaces – the action we take to support positive outcomes for nature.

Our most significant development this year is the signing of a 125-year lease for eight acres of rare and precious chalk grassland, immediately adjacent to our Winchester Science Centre site in the South Downs National Park.

The lease of land has been generously gifted to Wonderseekers by longstanding corporate supporter, Arqiva - the same organisation that donated the original site for Winchester Science Centre twenty five years ago. The new site presents an incredible opportunity to work with science and nature partners and children, to develop new environmental science engagement and conservation programmes.

To ensure continuous care and a seamless transition of ownership, we have maintained Arqiva's land management plan. In addition, we commissioned Arcadian Ecology and Consulting, a wholly owned subsidiary of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, to do a baseline data survey on the health and biodiversity of the site, providing a benchmark for future biodiversity targets.

Building on sustainability research conducted over the past few years, we commissioned multi-disciplinary engineering consultancy Hoare Lea to carry out sustainability modelling for Winchester Science Centre to achieve our sustainability objectives and inform future plans and investment.



Our experiences – the outcomes and impact we have through science and nature engagement.

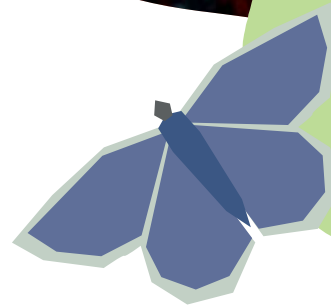
We believe we can empower children, through science engagement, to choose to live healthier, more sustainable lives, improving the outcomes for children and the planet.

We've been building our environmental science engagement through our public and schools programmes at Winchester Science Centre and in communities.

Our partnership with Butterfly Conservation, which has seen us work on various programmes together since 2017/18, continued this year. Together, we designed an outdoor science and nature workshop which we ran with 83 children and accompanying teachers on Butterfly Conservation's reserve. This activity has been hugely beneficial to building our team's confidence in delivering outdoor engagement and their knowledge of the land and its species.

Wonderseekers successfully bid for funding to run a two-year national programme, Our World from Space, which has been created and developed by the Association for Science and Discovery Centres (ASDC). The programme explores the relevance of UK space science for the future health and sustainability of our home planet. Through this project, our team created a series of fun, positive and interactive workshops and demonstrations using the themes of climate, oceans and biodiversity. These engaging workshops have been used to provide funded activity in our priority communities to build scientific enquiry skills and environmental awareness.

Our World from Space is funded by UK Space Agency in partnership with Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), part of UK Research and Innovation.



Our voice – the opportunities we create for children to be part of the wider conversation.

At Winchester Science Centre and through our community and schools programmes we engage children in conversation and debate about the world around them, science and nature.

We encourage them to share their ideas, opinions and experiences with us and have responded to what we have learned through our own development.

Our Young Steering Group has been a powerful influence on our Charity, demonstrating the passion, commitment and care children have for the world and their readiness to play their part. At our strategy launch last year, we asked children to share their hopes for environmental action. They made placards to raise awareness of the issues they felt needed the world's attention. This sent a powerful message to our guests that children care but also a powerful message to the children, that their voices matter.

Wonderseekers has a unique opportunity to listen to children and to amplify their voices on matters that they care about but equally a huge responsibility to do this in a way that is authentic and in the best interests of the children who participate. This year, we have been working with external arts practitioners to explore new ways of working with children and evaluation specialists to help capture their voices in an authentic and honest way. (See Bold Futures project, page 25)



Fundraising

Empowering children, with our funders.

On our journey to educate, maximise our social impact and build organisational resilience, the confidence and support that we receive from our funders is transformational.

Wonderseekers reinvests income from visitors to Winchester Science Centre, received through admissions, donations via GiftAid and retail purchases, to sustain the Charity and fund its day-to-day operating costs. Every penny generously received from others, through grants and donations, supports the creation of new experiences and removes barriers, enabling more young children - especially those underserved due to low socio-economic opportunities, disability, impairment and illness - to participate and engage in science and become active citizens.

In this first year, the development stage of our new strategy, we are especially grateful to the organisations mentioned below for their trust, guidance and financial leadership, which will catalyse the next stage of our plan.

Arqiva's gift in kind of a 125-year lease of eight acres of chalk grassland surrounding our Science Centre provides us with an exciting opportunity to engage children with the story of our local landscape, supporting them to understand its significance, deepen their connection to nature and develop and use their environmental science skills.

This year we've begun developing an exciting new exhibition and activity programme, Our Place On Earth, which will introduce children to the natural sciences and support them to understand and actively participate in environmental research. We are grateful to The Foyle Foundation, EXplora and UKRI through their "Mindsets + Missions" programme, for facilitating work with children from our priority communities, science experts and artists in equitable partnerships, to design and develop content that is relevant and relatable for children. As well as supporting brilliant public engagement and content creation, as part of their grant UKRI has also funded one local primary school to improve biodiversity in their playground through a "green space" project designed by the children.

The Goldsmiths' Charity has generously provided the seed funding for Habitat Playpark, a new outdoor exhibition, designed specifically for pre-school children and children with special educational needs and disability (SEND), to

support their introduction to the natural world and the skills to look after it. The grant will enable Wonderseekers to learn how to effectively engage very young children and those with additional needs through observation, consultation with Early Years and SEND specialists and a series of play-based workshops with pre-school children.

We are also grateful to Ecophon and Parlex for their continuing support and leadership in helping us launch our new corporate partnership scheme: Curiosity Collective.



I see Wonderseekers as the enabling piece for us to reach so many young people. If you wanted a return on your investment, there is none better than investing in young people. Because they are our future.

*Dominic Ward
Parlex, a Johnson Electric Company*



Become a corporate partner Join the Curiosity Collective.

The Curiosity Collective is an easy, cost-effective way to join us and other like-minded partners in creating a more equitable world where all children can treasure science and are equipped and empowered to improve lives and protect and heal our planet.

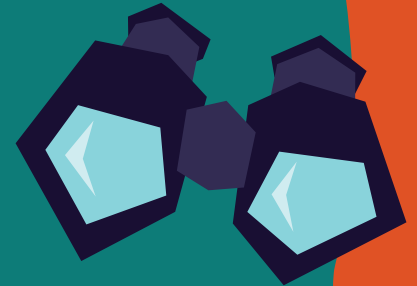
To join, please visit:

www.wonderseekers.charity/support-us/corporate-partnerships

For all other fundraising enquiries, please email

fundraising@wonderseekers.charity

or call **01962 863 791** and ask to speak to the Fundraising Team.



Volunteering

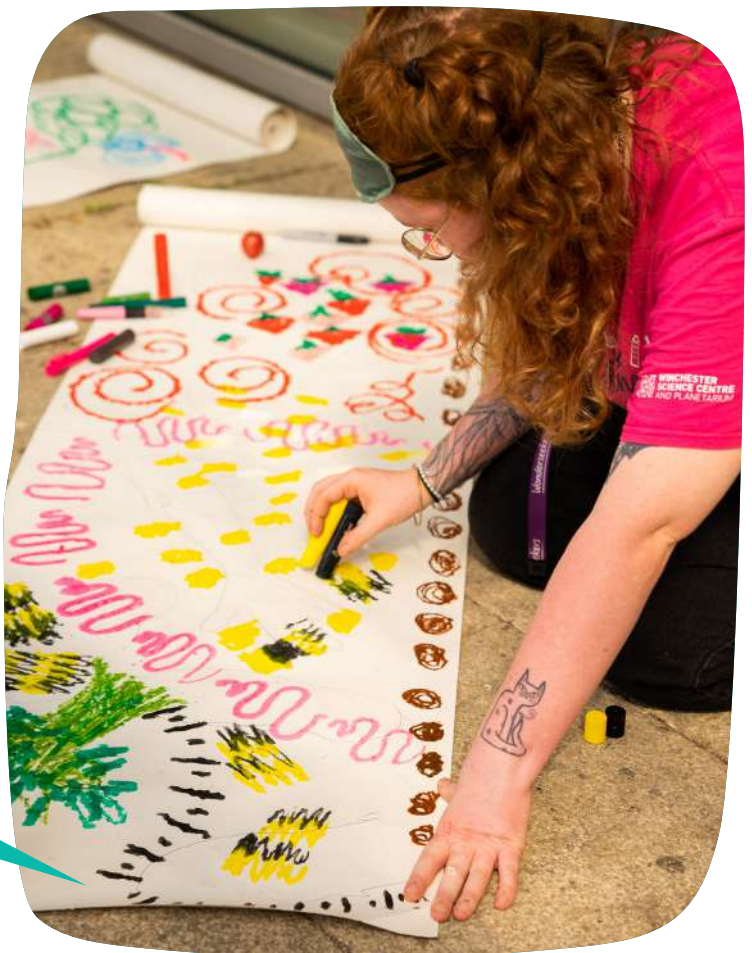
The Trustees and staff thank all our volunteers who have given their time, skills and expertise to support our Charity. We'd also like to thank our Patron, Young Steering Group and newly formed Project Advisory Board for their valuable time and the contribution they make.

As an educational charity, we love to provide opportunities for young people to gain work experience. Through Winchester Science Centre, we hosted 15 work experience placements for KS3/KS4 students in years 10-12. The programme was launched in 2022/23 and has grown significantly from the four placements awarded that first year. Students get to work alongside our Curiosity Team supporting the delivery of our school visits programme and experiencing all the 'behind the scenes' development and preparation that goes on.

We are also pleased to offer several student internships annually. This year, we welcomed two via SEPNet (South-East physics network) from University of Southampton and Royal Holloway, London, a Primary Education student from University of Chichester and a further student from University of Southampton via their Employment Service.

Winchester Science Centre also hosted a student for a year-long placement from the Supported Internship programme, facilitated by Eastleigh College and Eastleigh Borough Council. The internship, aimed at young people aged 16 – 24 with an Educational Health Care Plan, aims to give young people their first experience of working with an employer.

All placements were held with the Curiosity Team, supporting the schools and public programmes.





Wonderseekers Young Steering Group wins national volunteering award

Over the past two years our Young Steering Group members have all had one aim in common – to work together to drive change through the Charity and at the Science Centre, and to make science accessible to as many young people across the country as they can.

Their hard work has been recognised on a national scale as the group were presented with the Marsh Volunteer Youth Prize Award in partnership with the Association of Science and Discovery Centres (ASDC).

The awards panel noted that the children’s passion for science and nature and willingness to contribute their time and experience to support the Charity’s development shone through. And their co-creation of outdoor science engagement activities, which have been enjoyed by thousands of visitors, was also highlighted.

Shaaron Leverment, Chief Executive of the ASDC, said: “It was a highlight of 2023 to come to present these brilliant young volunteers with their prizes. Meeting some of their families, hearing their stories and passion for science and nature was an utter privilege. These young advocates and activists are making a real difference, not just to Wonderseekers but beyond!”

Our Young Steering Group, made up of children aged between six and 12, bring valuable insights into scientific topics, help determine how Wonderseekers can make a difference and speak to other young people, to help make science available to all children.

“ It was important to me because I love the environment, nature and I want to help animals. YSG helped me achieve this. ”
Tillie

“ It made me feel joyful because I was part of such a wonderful group ”
Sulaf

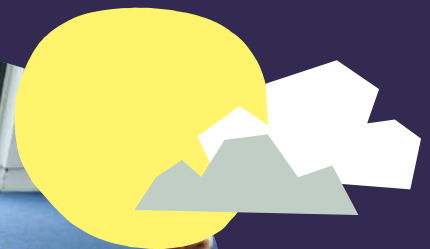
“ It has made me very proud of myself and I feel as though I can do anything! ”
Bella

Future plans

In last year's annual report, we set out our short-term aims to: build our learning about the land, continue to develop and test outdoor science engagement with schools and families; build relationships with our stakeholders, such as landowners, scientists, children and communities, and; improve our own environmental sustainability.

We're really pleased with the progress we have made this year to deliver on these aims, details of which are included throughout this report.

The launch of our new identity as Wonderseekers and the new strategy in 2023 marked the start of an exciting new chapter for our Charity. Over the past year, we have been building a masterplan, setting out how we intend to deliver on the strategy. This included a comprehensive review of all activities and plans previously in place. We recognised that to achieve our big ambitions for children and nature, we needed to take a systematic and Charity-wide approach to projects, encompassing organisational learning, evaluation, interpretation, sustainability and audience reach. As a result, our future plans focus on four key areas of development.



1

Child-centred science and nature partnerships

Working in collaboration with others is one of our core values and something we have been doing for many years with community, university, charity and corporate partners. However, these relationships have often been developed for a specific activity, programme or project and always led by adults. We are now looking to take a more systematic and equitable approach to partnership working and are especially keen to develop our co-working practices with children, scientific partners and arts practitioners.

Over the next year, we will work with our newly formed Young Design Panel (a cohort of children from our priority audiences), scientists and artist, Millie Rolle, to explore a range of themes including soil, food production, light pollution, local species, the sound of biodiversity and accessibility. Through this multidisciplinary collaboration, we will work towards creating ideas and inspiration that will help expand our environmental science content and experiences.

2

Early years science and nature experiences

Although we have promoted our experiences for children aged three – 12 much of our content is aimed at children aged 6 years and above. We are now looking to address this imbalance by investing in new early years experiences.

We will collaborate with artists, scientists, designers, children and early-years practitioners to understand very young children's connection with nature. Our ambition is to co-design an enchanting outdoor learning experience at Winchester Science Centre where children can explore small creature habitats through sensory, physical and imaginative play. Through storytelling, play and creative interpretation, we hope to help children to learn about the creatures of the South Downs, their habitats and ecosystems and develop a shared love for nature. The development phase for this project will begin in September 2024.

3

South Downs science and nature action

Urgent, collaborative action is needed to save our planet, but many children feel powerless to act. Securing the chalk grassland surrounding our Science Centre provides a timely opportunity to diversify our work and use our science engagement expertise, in partnership, to empower children with the skills and agency to protect and heal the planet.

Exploring the story of our land and with South Downs National Park partners, scientists and communities, we'll create equitable, positive environmental science experiences for children, especially those with complex barriers to accessing science and nature. Together we will work to restore the biodiversity of our grassland and celebrate local, natural heritage, strengthening children's connections with nature and building science skills so children can take wider action.

We are currently working with partners and seeking funding to realise this transformative project for children, the region and Wonderseekers.

4

Sustainability

In line with our Group Sustainability Strategy, we're looking to invest in our Science Centre infrastructure to improve the building's thermal efficiency and replace the oil-fueled heating system with a more sustainable electric alternative. Whilst we are seeking support from external partners to deliver these developments, these improvements are essential to our strategy. A new designated reserve has been created specifically for sustainability/infrastructure, which we hope will enable us to leverage further investment opportunities.



Financial review

Overview

Over the last eight years and despite the tough conditions during the pandemic the Charity has consolidated its core business, investing in its offer, improving its operating efficiency and making the best use of its income. It achieved a solid performance during 2023/24 and remained on a sound financial footing at the year end, ready to move forward on its For People and Planet 2030 strategy.

The lease of eight acres of chalk grassland gifted from Arqiva (note 14) is a key enabler for the Charity, providing an opportunity not only to expand its environmental science content and experiences but also to address one of the Charity's long-term risks: its dependence on the weather.

Whilst the Charity has been strengthening its core business, its underlying infrastructure has continued to age, and includes for example a heating system reliant on fossil fuels. To reduce the Charity's carbon footprint and improve its long-term sustainability a £500k reserve has been created to support investment in the Charity's infrastructure.



Income

Total group income for the year was £3,767k, an increase of £246k (7%) on 2022/23. This represents a strong performance for the Charity against a backdrop of ongoing cost of living pressures and economic uncertainty.

Donations and legacies – note 3

Income from Donations and Legacies was 29% up on 2022/23, predominantly due to the generous gift in kind of the lease of land surrounding the Science Centre. The land has been valued at £230k and has been recognised as a heritage asset in the accounts (note 14).

The Charity was also extremely grateful for the grants received to support community engagement programmes, details of which can be found on pages 12 and 19 in this report.

Charitable activities – note 4

Income derived from charitable activities fell by £130k (6%) but would have shown an increase of almost £200k (11%) if the one off VAT adjustment of £330k recognised in the 2022/23 accounts relating to the Charity's culturally exempt status had been excluded.

Visitor footfall continued to recover with the Charity reporting a rise in public admission visitors to 115,402, an increase of 8.4% on 2022/23. With the cost of living pressures continuing to affect so many families, a revised ticket pricing structure was introduced. This allowed visitors to receive discounts of up to 20% on standard admission costs if they booked in advance. Advance knowledge of visitor numbers also assisted the Charity in managing its resources. Overall admission fees rose by £276k (16%) from 2022/23.

Engagement and Outreach reduced by £85k (73%) due to the Charity's decision in 2022/23 not to renew the STEM Ambassador contract. Wonderseekers' work in communities continued with diversified grant funding, included in Donations and Legacies.

Income from trading activities – note 5

Events revenue increased by £88k (89%) in 2023/24 reaching levels not seen since before the pandemic. The strong performance in 2023/24 supports the decision to rebuild an events team focused on strategically-aligned, revenue generating events.

Trading operations saw an increase of £130k (22%) in 2023/24 reflecting both the increase in visitor numbers and a 12% increase in spend per visitor, primarily due to higher product prices as a result of inflation.

Expenditure

Expenditure in 2023/24 was broadly in line with 2022/23 decreasing by £50k (1%).

People costs – note 11

People costs rose by £59k (4%) in 2023/24. Although the average number of full-time equivalent employees also rose (by one), the structure of the workforce evolved as the STEM Ambassador contract ended and investment was made in the communications and operations teams. This allowed the Charity to give cost of living pay increases ranging from 4% to 10%, with the lowest paid staff receiving the greatest increases, whilst limiting the increase in overall people costs.

The average full-time equivalent employees for 2023/24 was 51 (2022/23: 50).

Expenditure on charitable activities – note 7

Expenditure linked to delivery of the Science Centre and other educational and outreach activities decreased by £219k (9%) due to the non-renewal of the STEM Ambassador contract in 2022/23.

Expenditure on raising funds – note 6

Trading costs rose by £154k (+17%) driven in part by increasing sales linked to rising visitor numbers and more events, but also reflecting the wider inflationary pressures in the economy as a whole.

Fundraising costs increased by £15k (20%) as the Charity prepared for the fundraising required to deliver on its ambitious future plans.

Governance and support costs – note 8

Governance and support costs fell by £42k (4%) due to efficiencies across the organisation leading to reduced overheads costs.



Reserves policy

The Charity holds both restricted and unrestricted funds, with the unrestricted funds covering both designated funds, funds set aside by the trustees for a specific purpose, and general funds, reserves which provide working capital and resources for unforeseen financial difficulties.

The Charity's policy on unrestricted general reserves is set based on forecast income and expenditure, the likelihood of material risks crystallising which would not be covered by future income or insurance, and horizon scanning for possible opportunities that may require some upfront investment.

The general unrestricted reserves is set with regard to:

- Annual budget – set to ensure the Charity's future expenditure levels are matched to the income the Charity receives from operating the Science Centre and other grants and income.
- Risk management process - assesses the impact and likelihood of all risks to the Charity and the appropriate level of short-term reserves to be held.

The Trustees have assessed the impact and likelihood of uninsured risks to create an expected value, which is reduced by the assessment of mitigating controls, to set the appropriate level of general unrestricted short-term reserves to be held. This value is formally reviewed on an annual basis with the opportunity for any material changes to be picked up within the risk review process.

In 2022/23 the Charity aimed to hold general unrestricted reserves of £300k – £350k, equivalent to three months of expenditure for full operations. With anticipated increases in staffing and other operational costs, the range of £400k – £450k has been considered more appropriate for 2023/24.

The designated Outdoor Science Engagement reserve of £600k created in 2022/23 has been maintained to support the Charity's future investment in developing and delivering its outdoor science engagement plans (with initial preparatory work on the plans being funded from the Charity's core operations).

The Charity has also recognised the need, in line with its sustainability strategy, to invest in the Science Centre's infrastructure, to reduce the Charity's carbon footprint and safeguard its long-term sustainability. In view of the substantial resources which will be required, a Capital Investment and Sustainability reserve of £500k has been created (see note 20).

General reserves outcome

Unrestricted reserves now stand at £3,325k, of which £2,847k were designated and £478k were general unrestricted reserves.

The Trustees are committed to using these funds to support our beneficiaries by pursuing the outdoor science engagement projects, investing in the Charity's building and reducing its environment impact, managing future risks and growing charitable impact.

Investment Policy

The Trustees have assessed the Charity's working capital requirements, and its liquid funds are considered sufficient to meet its short-term cash flow requirements. Its liquid funds were held in short-term notice accounts with A-rated high street banks pending implementation of the Charity's future plans.

Principal risks

The performance and risk profile of the Charity continues to be influenced by external pressures. While the challenges of the cost of living crisis and persistent high inflation provided the landscape for 2022/23, they also continued into 2023/24, impacting families, suppliers and Wonderseekers itself. Although outdoor activities at the Science Centre increased, warm, dry weather continued to negatively impact public visitor numbers.

The Charity's most effective response to these risks is through delivery of its strategy; building impact and resilience through diversification and growth. The reimagining of the Charity's Morn Hill site to expand the Charity's science engagement outdoors and increasing the Charity's focus on community and schools-based activity will build capacity and reduce its reliance on income generated through its predominantly indoor Science Centre experience.

The Trustees believe that sound risk management is integral to both good management and good governance practice.

Risk management is part of the Charity's decision-making and is incorporated within strategic and operational planning.

The Trustees recognise that risk is inherent in any operation and that some level of managed risk is essential if the Charity is to achieve the greatest impact for its beneficiaries.

Wonderseekers manages risk through a top-down-bottom-up approach assessing longer-term strategic risks alongside shorter-term operational and project risks.

The Senior Leadership Team maintains departmental and project risk registers identifying key risks to their departments and projects, which are updated and cascaded quarterly.

Any fast-moving or escalating risks during the quarter are reported at the weekly Senior Leadership Team meeting. Risks are cascaded to the Chair of Trustees and Chair of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee as required.

The Senior Leadership Team reviews the Charity's Risk Register monthly. The Charity risk position is reviewed quarterly by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and risk is a standing agenda item at all quarterly board meetings.

Risk: Recruitment and staff retention

Status: No change

Dynamic people-led experiences, synonymous with the Charity, and the Charity's ability to deliver the ambitious plans necessary to secure long-term resilience, growth and impact, rely on successful recruitment and the retention of key staff.

People costs are Wonderseekers' biggest annual expenditure so, whilst critical, an inability to provide remuneration levels in line with expectations, could limit the Charity's ability to recruit and retain the key staff needed.

Risk mitigation strategy: The Charity's ambitious strategy and future plans enable staff to remain highly invested in, and motivated by, the Charity's vision. Through projects, the Charity is developing evaluation methodology to capture, retain and share organisational learning and knowledge. The Board of Trustees and Senior Leadership Team will continue to foster a people-focused and values-based culture that is highly valued by staff and appeals to new recruits. Annual staff surveys will be used to measure satisfaction and identify employment terms valued by staff and areas for improvement. Progression within the Charity will be encouraged and regularly demonstrated, and salaries will continue to be reviewed and benchmarked. The Charity recognises that economic pressure is an external threat that cannot always be mitigated.

Risk: Fundraising

Status: No change

The scale of the Charity's future plans is heavily reliant on its ability to successfully fundraise. Failure to secure the necessary funding will limit its ability to deliver on its strategy as planned.

Development projects also include investment in the Charity's infrastructure and failure to secure funds could limit that investment.

Risk mitigation strategy: A fundraising strategy and plan have been developed following an initial fundraising feasibility study, and steps are being taken to implement the strategy. The Charity will continue to invest in the fundraising team to build internal capacity and expertise whilst also expanding the Charity's reach. The Charity is using a CRM system to support relationship management and cultivation. The Marketing and Communications Team will continue to expand corporate and campaign communications to build the Charity's credibility and profile to support fundraising. Funding lead times and milestones are factored into project timelines.

Risk: Project management

Status: Increasing

The Charity's future plans involve an ambitious redevelopment of its Morn Hill site including the additional project and financial risks associated with managing a multi-million-pound capital project.

The new asset, eight acres of rare chalk grassland, requires careful, long-term management to support and recover the site's biodiversity and to enable children to connect with nature and build science skills. Mismanagement of the project poses a risk to natural heritage, the Charity's reputation, credibility and resilience.

Risk mitigation strategy: An appropriate project governance structure has been designed to ensure sufficient direction and oversight, including a Project Steering Group for increasing project governance rigour. Capital project management expertise will be engaged to directly manage and oversee the project. A new role will be created to fulfil the Charity's land management responsibilities and support the site's biodiversity, and partnerships with conservationists, including South Downs National Park and Butterfly Conservation, will be further developed.

Energy consumption and carbon emissions

Through the delivery of our strategy and future plans, we have a key role to play within our region to address the climate and biodiversity emergencies.

To support children in our collective response to climate change and biodiversity loss, and as custodians of precious chalk downland, we must lead by example; working with others to protect and recover the important heritage of our site and do everything we can to reduce our carbon emissions and waste.

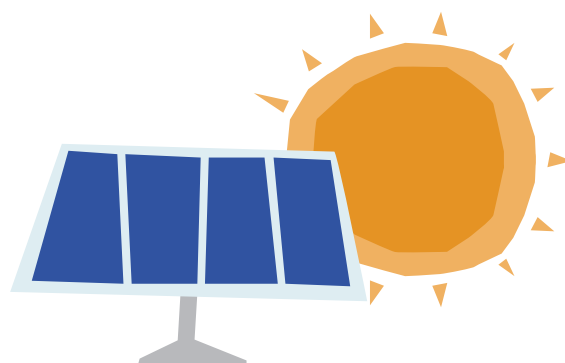
This year, we have created a new designated reserve to invest in our infrastructure to reduce our carbon footprint and safeguard the Charity's long-term sustainability, enabling us to make essential improvements as we develop our site for public benefit.

The increased use of our Science Centre for out-of-hours events and increased community engagement has resulted in an increase in utilities and travel.

		2021/22	~CO ₂ Tonné	2022/23	~CO ₂ Tonné	2023/24	~CO ₂ Tonné	% change in emissions
Electricity	KWh	251,582	58.15	244,354**	51.58	247,041	55.59	7.77
Heating Oil	litres	37,174	102.55	27,901	76.97	27,088	74.64	-3.03
Business Travel	miles	3,734	0.85	5,239	1.77	15,524	2.78	57.06
Fuel Purchase	litres	574	1.26*	599	1.29*	729	1.52	17.83
Water	m ³	1,546	0.23*	1,691	0.25	2,197	0.39	56.00
Waste	tonnes	29.03	5.84	49.50**	7.19	44.50	6.59	-8.34
Total			168.88		139.05		141.51	
Emission per employee	tCO ₂ e		4.02		2.78		2.77	
Emissions per £M turnover	tCO ₂ e		46.52		39.49		37.57	

* Error in reporting of 2021/2022 figures provided by GEP Carbon Footprint Assessment.

**Update to consumption figures post publication. Emissions figures updated to reflect this.





Structure, governance and management

Wonderseekers is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity.

Our Charity is governed by our Articles of Association, which sets out the Charity's powers and authorities. The objective of the Charity is detailed in the Articles of Association:

To advance the education, knowledge and understanding of the public, in particular the young, in basic technological and scientific principles and processes, particularly through the improvements of the links between industrial, commercial and educational bodies and institutions.



The Charity's wholly owned subsidiary, Sparking Curiosity Ltd, operates the onsite shop and café under licence from the Charity and gift aids the maximum permissible amount of its profits to the Charity (see note 10 to the accounts).

Wonderseekers operates under principles documented in our Code of Governance, which comply with the Charity Governance Code for larger charities (2020).

The Board of Trustees holds all the Charity's powers and authorities.

The Board is ultimately responsible for the overall control and strategic direction of the Charity and for the protection of its assets. The Board receives regular updates on the major risks likely to affect the Charity and ensures these are properly documented and that mitigating actions are in place and actively managed. The Board receives regular updates on the handling of personal data held by the Charity and ensures the policy and procedures are compliant with legislation.

In setting our objectives and planning our activities the Trustees have carefully considered the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. Operational management is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer, Ben Ward, and the Senior Leadership Team.

Board of Trustees

The Trustees, also Directors under company law, are elected by the Board at the Annual General Meeting and serve for a three-year term.

Trustees can be re-appointed for up to a maximum of three terms. The performance of individual Trustees, including the Chair, is informally reviewed each year. All Trustees give their time freely and no Trustee has received remuneration in the year. Details of Trustee expenses and related party transactions are disclosed in notes 11 and 23 of the accounts.

The Board issues public advertisements for trustees and aims to attract a diverse range of candidates with the skills the Charity needs. It values the benefits of a membership with a variety of backgrounds, expertise and experience. New Trustees undertake an induction programme that includes meeting senior management and fellow trustees. It also covers the Charity's aims and how they are being fulfilled, the Code of Governance including Committee structures and decision-making processes, the business plan and recent financial performance. Trustees are encouraged to attend appropriate external training events where an appropriate budget has been allocated to cover Trustee expenses and course fees.



Board and committee membership and attendance

Title	First name	Last name	Appointed	Stepped down	Full board Apr, Jul, Oct, Nov, Feb	AGM Oct	FARC Apr, Jul, Oct, Dec, Jan	NomRem Apr, May, Jun, Aug, Dec	Fundraising Jan	D&L Apr
Mrs	Phyllida	James	21/10/21		5 of 5	1 of 1	5 of 5		1 of 1	
Dr	Ian	Jenkins	30/09/14	18/10/23	3 of 3	1 of 1		4 of 4		
Mr	Malcolm	Kemp	18/10/23		3 of 3		3 of 3			
Dr	Toby	King	31/10/17	23/11/23	3 of 4	1 of 1		4 of 4		
Mrs	Tajinder	Leonard	26/11/19		3 of 5	0 of 1		4 of 5	1 of 1	
Prof	Diane	Newell	29/09/15	09/05/23	1 of 1	1 of 1				1 of 1
Dr	Janet	Owen	18/10/23 (appointed Chair 24/11/23)		3 of 3	1 of 1				
Mr	Adrian	Owen	26/11/19	18/10/23	3 of 3	1 of 1	3 of 3			
Mrs	Sue	Parr	26/11/19	26/05/24	3 of 5	1 of 1	1 of 5			1 of 1
Prof	Janet	Preston	30/09/14	18/10/23	2 of 3	1 of 1		1 of 4		1 of 1
Mrs	Katherine (Katie)	Roberts	21/10/21		5 of 5	1 of 1				
Ms	Yvonne	Rowland	18/10/23		3 of 3				0 of 1	
Mrs	Sara	Sullivan	26/11/19		5 of 5	1 of 1		5 of 5		
Ms	Linda	Taylor	18/10/23		3 of 3			1 of 1		
Dr	Rutang	Thanawalla	21/10/21		4 of 5	1 of 1	3 of 5		1 of 1	
Mr	Thomas	Wyman	18/10/23		3 of 3					

Board effectiveness

In Summer 2022 an external Board Effectiveness Review took place. This was a follow up to an Internal Board Effectiveness Review in Spring of 2021 (which assessed adherence to recommendations in the Charity Governance code 2020).

A skills audit of the board is currently underway which will help shape the future make-up of the board and form part of future effectiveness reviews.

Organisation

The Board holds five meetings a year, one dedicated to Strategy, and has established the following four Committees: Finance, Audit and Risk; Nominations and Remunerations; Purpose and Impact (which replaced Discovery and Learning in spring 2024), and Fundraising which report to the Board.

The Finance, Audit and Risk Committee is independent of the management of the Charity. It has the standing and resources to report directly with opinion and oversight to the Board of Trustees on the annual report and accounts and other financial reports, the risk management process and risk register, delivering value for money, policy maintenance and the Charity's whistleblowing arrangements. It is also responsible for making recommendations to the Board of Trustees about the performance, appointment, reappointment and removal of the external auditors.

The Nominations and Remuneration Committee reports to the Board on governance effectiveness, the structure, size and composition of the Board, succession planning and on the salary and benefits of the CEO and members of the Senior Leadership Team.

The committee makes recommendations to the Board of both the Charity and its subsidiary for approval of new trustees, chairs and deputy chairs of both Boards and committees. It also recommends salary and benefits for the CEO, Senior Leadership Team, appointment of CEO and carries out an annual review and update of the Code of Governance.

In reviewing the salary and benefits for the CEO and the Senior Leadership Team the committee considers salary benchmarks for equivalent roles in the sector. The committee sets individual performance in the year against the objectives agreed in each annual review and makes a salary review recommendation to the Board for approval.

The Purpose and Impact Committee has replaced the Discovery and Learning Committee. It is responsible with the Senior Leadership Team for coordinating the delivery of science content for the benefit of children and public. It aims to ensure coherence in all activities, a clear rationale for new projects and adherence to the Charity's values.

The Fundraising Committee contributes expertise as well as regional and industry sector perspectives to the development and successful operation of the fundraising programme. Members contribute ideas and engage with other Trustees to open new fundraising sources. The responsibility for developing the fundraising strategy and delivering fundraising activities rests with the executive team.

Related parties and co-operation with other organisations

Any relationship between a Trustee or senior manager of the Charity with a university, sponsoring company exhibition, or an organisation contracted to work for the Charity is openly disclosed to the Board.

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

The Charity Trustees are responsible for preparing a Trustees' annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). Company law requires the Charity Trustees to prepare financial statements for each year that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the parent charitable company and the group, and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable group for that period. In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently,
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP,
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent,
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements,
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website.

Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.



Financial statements

Provision of information to auditors

So far as each of the Trustees at the time the report is approved are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware and,
- they have taken all the steps they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information, and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

Auditor

A resolution to reappoint Haysmacintyre LLP as auditor will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting.

In preparing this report the Trustees have taken advantage of the small companies exemptions provided by section 415A of the Companies Act 2006.

The Trustees' Annual Report was approved by the Board of Trustees on 25th October 2024 and signed on its behalf:



Dr Janet Owen
Chair of Trustees

Janet Owen

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Independent auditor's report to the members of Wonderseekers

Opinion

We have audited the consolidated financial statements of Wonderseekers for the year ended 31st March 2024 which comprise the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities, Consolidated Balance Sheet, Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and of the parent charitable company's affairs as at 31st March 2024 and of the group's and of the parent charitable company's net movement in funds, including the income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the group's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees' Annual Report and the Chair's statement. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Annual Report (which includes the strategic report and the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the directors' report included within the Trustees' Annual Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Independent auditor's report to the members of Wonderseekers (continued)

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and of the parent charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Annual Report (which incorporates the strategic report and the directors' report).

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the group; or
- the group financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies' regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the trustees' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 48, the trustees (who are also the directors of the group and of the parent charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the group's and of the parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless

the trustees either intend to liquidate the group or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of noncompliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

Based on our understanding of the group and the



environment in which it operates, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to charity and company law applicable in England and Wales, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls) and determined that the principal risks were related to revenue recognition, and management override of controls. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:

- Inspecting correspondence with regulators;
- Discussions with management including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulation and fraud;
- Reviewing the controls and procedures of the charity relevant to the preparation of the financial statements to ensure these were in place throughout the year;
- Evaluating management's controls designed to prevent and detect irregularities;
- Identifying and testing journals, in particular journal entries posted with unusual account combinations, postings by unusual users or with unusual descriptions, and
- Challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in their critical accounting estimates.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the group's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the group's members those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the group and the group's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Jane Askew



Senior Statutory Auditor, For and on behalf of
Haysmacintyre LLP,
Statutory Auditors
10 Queen Street Place
London
EC4R 1AG

Date: 15 November 2024

Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities

(incorporating an income and expenditure account)

For the year ending 31st March 2024

	Note	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Total funds 2024 £'000	Total funds 2023 £'000
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	3	700	58	758	589
<i>Charitable activities:</i>					
Science Centre	4	2,038	-	2,038	2,084
Engagement and Outreach		32	-	32	117
Income from investments		26	-	26	6
Other trading activities	5	913	-	913	725
Total		3,709	58	3,767	3,521
Expenditure on:					
<i>Raising funds:</i>					
Other trading activities	6	1,138	3	1,141	972
<i>Charitable activities:</i>					
Science Centre	7	1,997	48	2,045	2,093
Engagement and Outreach		108	26	134	305
Total		3,243	77	3,320	3,370
Net income/(expenditure):		466	(19)	447	151
Net movement in funds		466	(19)	447	151
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward	20	2,859	303	3,162	3,011
Total funds carried forward		3,325	284	3,609	3,162

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year, and all income and expenditure derived from continuing activities.

Consolidated and Charity Balance Sheet

As at 31st March 2024

	Note	Group 2024 £'000	Group 2023 £'000	Charity 2024 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000
Fixed assets:					
Tangible assets: Land, buildings, plant and equipment	13	1,537	1,819	1,537	1,819
Heritage assets: Land	14	229	-	229	-
Total fixed assets		1,766	1,819	1,766	1,819
Current assets:					
Stocks	15	36	39	9	8
Debtors	16	209	138	183	163
Short term investments		450	450	450	450
Cash at bank and in hand		1,592	1,143	1,496	1,056
Total current assets		2,287	1,770	2,138	1,677
Liabilities:					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	17	(444)	(427)	(416)	(392)
Net current assets		1,843	1,343	1,722	1,285
Total assets less current liabilities		3,609	3,162	3,488	3,104
Total net assets		3,609	3,162	3,488	3,104
The funds of the charity	20				
Restricted income funds		284	303	284	303
Unrestricted funds:					
Designated		2,847	2,338	2,847	2,338
General unrestricted		478	521	357	463
Total unrestricted funds		3,325	2,859	3,204	2,801
Total charity funds		3,609	3,162	3,488	3,104

Wonderseekers (the parent entity) reports a surplus for financial year 2023/24 of £384k (2022/23: £268k surplus).

The financial statements of Wonderseekers (registered number 02014929) were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 25 October 2024.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees

Dr Janet Owen *Janet Owen*
Chair of Trustees

Consolidated and Charity Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ending 31st March 2024

	Note	Group 2024 £'000	Group 2023 £'000	Charity 2024 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000
Cash flows from operating activities:					
Net cash provided by operating activities	A	717	590	708	747
Cash flows from investing activities:					
Purchase of plant and equipment		(38)	(153)	(38)	(153)
Purchase of heritage asset		(230)	-	(230)	-
Net cash used in investing activities		(268)	(153)	(268)	(153)
Cash flows from financing activities:					
Repayment of borrowing		-	(601)	-	(601)
Interest paid		-	(17)	-	(17)
Net cash (used in)/provided by financing activities		-	(618)	-	(618)
Increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the year		449	(181)	440	(24)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		1,593	1,774	1,506	1,530
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	B	2,042	1,593	1,946	1,506

Consolidated and Charity Statement of Cash Flows (continued)

For the year ending 31st March 2024

Notes to the cash flow statement

A) Reconciliation of net income to net cash flow generated from operating activities

	Group 2024 £'000	Group 2023 £'000	Charity 2024 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000
Net income/(expenditure) for the year	447	151	384	268
Adjustments for:				
Depreciation charges	318	411	318	411
(Increase)/decrease in stocks	3	(15)	(1)	1
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(71)	119	(20)	100
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	17	(93)	24	(50)
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	3	0	3	0
Interest paid	0	17	0	17
Net cash provided by operating activities	717	590	708	747

B) Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	Group 2024 £'000	Group 2023 £'000	Charity 2024 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000
Cash in hand	1,592	1,143	1,496	1,056
Cash on deposit	450	450	450	450
Total cash and cash equivalents	2,042	1,593	1,946	1,506

C) Analysis of changes in net debt

	As at 1st April 2023	Cash-flows	Non-cash changes	As at 31st March 2024
Unrestricted cash	1,143	449	-	1,592
Total	1,143	449	-	1,592

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ending 31st March 2024

1. Accounting policies

Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: 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 (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historic cost convention. Wonderseekers meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Wonderseekers is a company limited by guarantee and incorporated in England and Wales. The Registered Office is: Telegraph Way, Morn Hill, Winchester, Hampshire, SO21 1HZ.

Group financial statements

The Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA), Consolidated Balance Sheet and the Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows consolidate the financial statements of the Charity and its subsidiary undertaking. The results of the subsidiary are consolidated on a line by line basis.

No separate SOFA has been prepared for the Charity alone as permitted by Section 408 of the Companies Act 2006.

Preparation of accounts on a going concern basis

The Group's primary source of income continues to be visitors to the Science Centre.

After careful consideration of the Group's current financial position, with due attention paid to the Group's cash flows, liquidity and borrowings, and future plans and prospects, the Trustees are confident that the Group has adequate resources to continue in operation for the foreseeable future which is at least 12 months from the date of approval of these financial statements. Accordingly, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the accounts.

Income

Income is recognised when the Group has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount is measurable.

Donated services and facilities

On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the Group, which is the amount the Group would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the Group. Designated funds are unrestricted funds of the Group which the Trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a particular purpose.

Restricted funds

Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the Group's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the Group.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following headings:

- Costs of raising funds comprise the costs of commercial trading including the shop and café and their associated support costs. It also includes a proportion of the cost of front-of-house staff.
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of exhibitions, educational and other activities undertaken to further the purposes of the Charity and their associated support costs.

Allocation of support costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the Group but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include back office costs, finance, facilities, personnel, IT and governance costs which support the Group's activities. These costs have been allocated between the cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities. The basis on which support costs have been allocated are set out in note 8.

Tangible fixed assets

The Group has elected to use the 'deemed cost' option on transition to FRS102 for Land and Buildings which have been revalued as at 31 March 2014 and have been depreciated from that date. Other tangible fixed assets are capitalised at cost and are depreciated on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful economic lives as follows:

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued) for the year ending 31st March 2024

Asset category	Annual rate
Intellectual assets	10%
Planetarium	10% – 33⅓%
Office equipment	20%
Computer equipment	33⅓%
Technical equipment	6⅔% – 33⅓%
Exhibition equipment	20% – 33⅓%
Equipment library	20%
Motor vehicles	25%
Freehold buildings	2%
Freehold land	Nil

Heritage assets

The Group holds land as a heritage asset to support the Group's primary objective of furthering the public understanding, particularly the young, of scientific principles and processes, enabling expansion into the natural sciences. The 9.7 acres of land is an excellent example of biodiverse chalk downland, home to a range of flora and fauna unique to this habitat and is highly visible to all visitors to the Science Centre and currently accessible for research and restoration purposes.

The heritage asset was donated to the Group under a 125-year lease and has been recorded under the 'deemed cost' approach at its valuation as at the grant of the lease. The asset will be reviewed for impairment on an annual basis. The asset will be depreciated on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease.

Stock

Stock is included at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

Debtors

Short term debtors are measured at transaction price, less any impairment.

Short term investments

Short term investments are cash deposits held with financial institutions with maturities of greater than three months. They are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

Cash at bank and in hand

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions with original maturities of less than or equal to three months. These are short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

Creditors

Short term trade creditors are measured at the transaction price. Other financial liabilities, including bank loans, are initially measured at the transaction value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.

Operating leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease.

Corporation tax

The Charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

Any profits generated from the Charity's trading subsidiary Sparking Curiosity Ltd will be transferred to the parent with a gift aid payment and therefore no taxation is due.

Financial instruments

The Group has financial assets and liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

Judgements in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation

In the application of the Group's accounting policies, described in the accounting policies above, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates. The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

The Trustee representatives consider that the following are key estimates;

- Depreciation of fixed assets is charged over the useful economic life of the assets. Trustees and management review the useful economic life on an annual basis.
- Bad debt provisions – debtors are reviewed regularly to assess likelihood of recoverability. A provision of bad debt is estimated based on these reviews. At the year end, no bad debt provision has been made (2023: £0k).

2. Legal status of the Charity

The Charity is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. 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.

3. Income from donations and legacies

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Donations and grants	667	515
Membership subscriptions	91	74
Total	758	589

The Charity benefits greatly from the involvement and enthusiastic support of its many volunteers, details of which are given in our annual report. In accordance with FRS 102 and the Charities SORP (FRS 102), the economic contribution of general volunteers is not recognised in the accounts. Donations include the Heritage land asset at £230k.

4. Income from charitable activities

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
<i>Science Centre:</i>		
Admission fees	2,037	1,761
Exhibit sponsorship	-	(13)
Tax relief	1	336
Total	2,038	2,084
<i>Engagement and Outreach:</i>		
STEM NOW	-	86
Outreach workshops	32	31
Total	32	117

5. Income from other trading activities

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Fundraising events	187	99
Trading operations	726	596
Corporate sponsorship	-	30
Total	913	725

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued) for the year ending 31st March 2024

6. Expenditure on raising funds

	Direct staff costs £'000	Other direct costs £'000	Governance support costs £'000	Other support costs £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Trading costs	245	565	11	226	1,047	893
Fundraising costs	71	23	-	-	94	79
Total	316	588	11	226	1,141	972

7. Expenditure on charitable activities

	Direct staff costs £'000	Other direct costs £'000	Governance support costs £'000	Other support costs £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Science Centre	921	552	22	550	2,045	2,093
Engagement and Outreach	10	41	4	79	134	305
Total	931	593	26	629	2,179	2,398

8. Analysis of governance and support costs

	Direct staff costs £'000	Overheads £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Governance costs	-	36	36	47
Finance, HR and IT costs	269	110	379	386
Management costs	183	53	236	141
Premises and office costs	-	241	241	360
Total	452	440	892	934

Support costs related to the building have been re-allocated on a square footage basis, whilst other costs have been re-allocated on a direct cost basis.

9. Net income for the year

<i>This is stated after charging:</i>	Group 2024 £'000	Group 2023 £'000	Charity 2024 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000
Depreciation	317	410	317	410
<i>Auditor's remuneration for:</i>				
Audit	22	19	17	15
Taxation services	5	4	5	4
<i>Operating lease rentals:</i>				
Plant and machinery	12	11	12	11

10. Investment in subsidiary and trading income

The Charity has a wholly owned trading subsidiary, Sparking Curiosity Limited (Company Number 10661776), which is incorporated in England and Wales. A summary of the trading results of the subsidiary to 31 March 2024 is shown below. This includes a management charge levied by the Charity of £347k (2023: £304k). Audited accounts are filed with the Registrar of Companies.

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Turnover	813	640
Cost of sales	(364)	(304)
Gross profit	449	336
Other operating charges	(381)	(331)
Profit for the year before tax	68	5

The capital of the company comprises 100 ordinary shares of £1 each. The maximum permissible amount of the subsidiary's reserves of £121,180 will be transferred to the parent by 31 December 2024 such that no tax will be payable by the subsidiary.

11. Analysis of staff costs, Trustee remuneration and expenses, and the cost of key management personnel

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Salaries and wages	1,536	1,484
Social security costs	128	124
Pension costs	34	28
Redundancy costs	-	3
Total	1,698	1,639

The number of employees whose emoluments exceeded £60,000 during the year was:

	2024 Number	2023 Number
£90,001 - £100,000	1	-
£80,001 - £90,000	-	1
£60,001 - £70,000	1	1

Pension costs are allocated to activities in proportion to the related staffing costs incurred.

The Trustees were not paid and did not receive any other benefits from employment with the charity in the year (2023: £0). One trustee was reimbursed £74.10 for travel costs during the year (2023: £157.50). No Trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2023: £0).

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees, CEO, and Directors of Finance and Operations, Experiences, Science Engagement, Marketing and Communications and Fundraising. The total employee costs of the key management personnel of the charity were £396k (2023: £353k).

12. Staff numbers

The average monthly head count was 101 staff (2023: 92 staff) and the average monthly number of full-time equivalent employees (including casual and part-time staff) during the year were as follows:

	2024 Number	2023 Number
Science Centre	41	41
Office and management	10	9
Total	51	50

All staff were employed by the Charity.

13. Tangible fixed assets – Group

	Intellectual assets £'000	Equipment £'000	Freehold land and buildings £'000	Total £'000
Cost or valuation				
At 1 April 2023	253	2,677	1,087	4,017
Additions	-	38	-	38
Disposals	-	(29)	-	(29)
As at 31 March 2024	253	2,686	1,087	4,026
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2023	253	1,830	115	2,198
Charge for year	-	298	19	317
Eliminated on disposal	-	(26)	-	(26)
As at 31 March 2024	253	2,102	134	2,489
Net book value:				
As at 31 March 2024	-	584	953	1,537
As at 31 March 2023	-	847	972	1,819

In July 2016, the land and buildings were inspected by Andrew Smith & Son of Winchester to obtain a current open market valuation at 31st March 2014. The buildings were valued at £1,000k and the land at £125k. The Trustees restated opening balances on 1 April 2015 in accordance with the deemed cost option of FRS 102. Had the deemed cost option not been elected, at 31 March 2024, the cost of freehold land and buildings stated above would be £7,621k, and the net book value £5,289k.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued) for the year ending 31st March 2024

13. Tangible fixed assets – Charity

	Intellectual assets £'000	Equipment £'000	Freehold land and buildings £'000	Total £'000
Cost or valuation:				
At 1 April 2023	253	2,676	1,087	4,016
Additions	-	38	-	38
Disposals	-	(29)	-	(29)
As at 31 March 2024	253	2,685	1,087	4,025
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2023	253	1,829	115	2,197
Charge for year	-	298	19	317
Eliminated on disposal	-	(26)	-	(26)
As at 31 March 2024	253	2,101	134	2,488
Net book value:				
As at 31 March 2024	-	584	953	1,537
As at 31 March 2023	-	847	972	1,819

14. Heritage assets - Group and charity

	Land £'000	Total £'000
Cost or valuation:		
At 1 April 2023	-	-
Additions	230	230
As at 31 March 2024	230	230
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2023	-	-
Charge for year	1	1
As at 31 March 2024	1	1
Net book value:		
As at 31 March 2024	229	229
As at 31 March 2023	-	-

Additions in financial year 2023/24 comprise the £230k donation from Arqiva of land adjacent to the Charity's site at Morn Hill, Winchester, on a long term lease (125 years) with a peppercorn rent. The Charity's external valuer (Lambert Smith Hampton) carried out a desk based survey of the land as at 31 March 2024. The valuation was based on the current use of the land and relevant planning policy.

Summary of Transactions: There were no other transactions in the five years prior to the year end date of 31 March 2024.

15. Stock

	Group 2024 £'000	Group 2023 £'000	Charity 2024 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000
Shop goods for resale	27	31	-	-
Heating fuel	9	8	9	8
Total	36	39	9	8

During the year, £346k (2022/23 £327k) of stock was recognised as an expense.

16. Debtors

	Group 2024 £'000	Group 2023 £'000	Charity 2024 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000
Trade debtors	49	38	43	38
Prepayments	50	36	34	36
Grants	-	3	-	3
Events	3	4	-	-
Tax relief	-	8	-	8
Amounts owed from group undertakings	-	-	16	30
Other	107	49	90	48
Total	209	138	183	163

17. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Group 2024 £'000	Group 2023 £'000	Charity 2024 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000
Trade creditors	104	73	90	57
Accruals	48	160	41	151
Taxation and social security	50	41	50	41
Other creditors	16	18	16	11
Deferred income	226	135	219	132
Total	444	427	416	392

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued) for the year ending 31st March 2024

18. Deferred income

Deferred income comprises: advance ticket sales related to admission to the Science Centre and for events held after 31 March 2024 of £89k (2022/23 £76k), deferred membership from annual passes of £51k (2022/23 £44k) and deferred grant income of £86k (2022/23 £15k).

	Group 2024 £'000	Group 2023 £'000	Charity 2024 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000
Balance as at 1 April	135	273	132	248
Amount released to income and expenditure account	(135)	(273)	(132)	(248)
Amount deferred in year	226	135	219	132
Balance as at 31 March	226	135	219	132

19. Analysis of assets and liabilities between funds

	Restricted funds 2024 £'000	Unrestricted funds 2024 £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Restricted funds 2023 £'000	Unrestricted funds 2023 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Group:						
Fixed assets	284	1,253	1,537	303	1,516	1,819
Heritage assets	-	229	229	-	-	-
Current assets	-	2,287	2,287	-	1,770	1,770
Current liabilities	-	(444)	(444)	-	(427)	(427)
Group total	284	3,325	3,609	303	2,859	3,162
Charity:						
Fixed assets	284	1,253	1,537	303	1,516	1,819
Heritage assets	-	229	229	-	-	-
Current assets	-	2,138	2,138	-	1,677	1,677
Current liabilities	-	(416)	(416)	-	(392)	(392)
Charity total	284	3,204	3,488	303	2,801	3,104

20. Movement in funds

	At 1st April 2023 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Transfer between funds £'000	At 31st March 2024 £'000
Restricted funds:					
Widening Participation and Outreach	-	57	(57)	-	-
Millennium Project	303	-	(19)	-	284
Other restricted funds	-	1	(1)	-	-
Total restricted funds	303	58	(77)	-	284
Unrestricted funds:					
<i>Designated:</i>					
Planetarium	199	55	-	-	254
Fixed Assets	1,517	-	(298)	35	1,254
Heritage Assets	-	-	(1)	230	229
Outdoor Science Engagement	600	-	-	-	600
Environmental Infrastructure	-	-	-	500	500
Exhibition	22	-	(12)	-	10
Total designated funds	2,338	55	(311)	765	2,847
<i>Unrestricted:</i>					
General unrestricted	463	2,841	(2,182)	(765)	357
Total general unrestricted funds	463	2,841	(2,182)	(765)	357
Total unrestricted funds	2,801	2,896	(2,493)	-	3,204
Total charitable funds	3,104	2,954	(2,570)	-	3,488
Trading subsidiary	58	813	(750)	-	121
Total group funds	3,162	3,767	(3,320)	-	3,609

See note 27 for prior year comparatives

Restricted funds

The Charity received donations and grants which the donor specified to be solely used for particular areas of the Charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the Charity.

Widening Participation and Outreach

A number of discrete projects to reach underserved audiences. Projects included outreach activities in school and community settings.

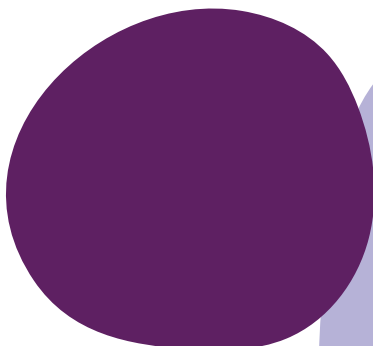
Millennium Project

A capital development project for the creation of the Science Centre, placing restrictions on the use of the building.

Unrestricted funds

These are funds available for the general objectives of the Charity. Included within unrestricted funds are designated funds that the Charity has put aside for a specific purpose. The Charity has existing fixed assets that are essential to its operation, the value of which has been designated. A designated fund, Outdoor Science Engagement, was established in 2022/23 to support the Charity's ambitious future plans. The heritage asset donated in 2023/24 has been designated to further support these plans. A further designated fund of £500k has been created to support the improvement of the Charity's infrastructure and reduce its carbon footprint.

The transfers between general unrestricted funds and designated funds represent the movements on each of these designated funds in the year.



21. Operating lease commitments – Group and Charity

The future operating lease payments are as follows:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Within one year	6	11
Between one and five years	-	6
Total	6	16

22. Pension scheme

During the year £34k (2023: £28k) was paid into a defined contribution pension scheme. At the year-end contributions of £7k (2023: £0k) were due to the scheme.

23. Related party transactions

Prior to Dr Janet Owen becoming Chair of Trustees, the Charity had engaged her as a consultant, with payments totalling £15k to The Earth Museum (2022/23: £2k), where she is a Director and person with significant control, and to Janet Owen Consultancy of £21k in 2022/23. No payments have been made since her appointment as Chair of Trustees.

There were no related party transactions in 2023/24, nor in 2022/23.

24. Limitation of liability

Wonderseekers is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. At the year ended 31 March 2024, there were 11 members (11 members at 31 March 2023), each of whom has undertaken to contribute a maximum of £1, if required, in the event of the winding up of the company.

25. Capital commitments

There were no outstanding capital commitments at 31 March 2024.

26. 2023 Statement of Financial Activities (Prior Year)

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Total funds 2023 £'000	Total funds 2022 £'000
Income and endowments from:				
Donations and legacies	543	46	589	999
<i>Charitable activities:</i>				
Science Centre	2,084	-	2,084	1,819
Engagement and Outreach	115	2	117	206
Income from investments	6	-	6	1
Other trading activities	720	5	725	605
Total	3,468	53	3,521	3,630
Expenditure on:				
<i>Raising funds:</i>				
Other trading activities	967	5	972	756
<i>Charitable activities:</i>				
Science Centre	2,049	44	2,093	1,886
Engagement and Outreach	281	24	305	227
Total	3,297	73	3,370	2,869
Net (expenditure)/income:	171	(20)	151	761
Transfer between funds	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	171	(20)	151	761
Reconciliation of funds:				
Total funds brought forward	2,688	323	3,011	2,250
Total funds carried forward	2,859	303	3,162	3,011

27. 2023 Movement in funds (Prior Year)

	At 1 April 2022 £'000	Incoming resources £'000	Outgoing resources £'000	Transfer between funds £'000	At 31 March 2023 £'000
Restricted funds:					
Widening Participation and Outreach	-	53	(53)	-	-
Millennium Project	323	-	(20)	-	303
Other restricted funds	-	-	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	323	53	(73)	-	303
Unrestricted funds:					
Designated:					
Planetarium	152	47	-	-	199
Fixed Assets	1,755	-	(391)	153	1,517
Outdoor Science Engagement	-	-	-	600	600
Exhibition	44	(13)	(9)	-	22
STEM NOW	-	87	(47)	(40)	-
Total designated funds	1,951	121	(447)	713	2,338
Unrestricted:					
General unrestricted	562	2,707	(2,093)	(713)	463
Total general unrestricted funds	562	2,707	(2,093)	(713)	463
Total unrestricted funds	2,513	2,828	(2,540)	-	2,801
Total charitable funds	2,836	2,881	(2,613)	-	3,104
Trading subsidiary	175	640	(757)	-	58
Total Group funds	3,011	3,521	(3,370)	-	3,162

Charity information

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Telegraph Way
Morn Hill
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Registered charity no.

294582

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Peter Rogers MSc CEng FIOA FRSA MIOL

Life members

Mr Jeremy C Booker ACA

Mr Colin Brook

Dr Dolores Byrne OBE HonFIET CEng

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Dr Ian C Jenkins MSc

Dr Toby StJohn King MA PhD CEng FIMechE

Mr David Livermore OBE

Ms Terry V Marsh FRTS FRSA

Mr David Morgan

Sir Martin Read CBE, MA (Cantab), D.Phil (Oxon), FIET

Mrs Elizabeth M Wallace

Board of Trustees

Dr Janet Owen, FRSA, AMA, MA (Cantab), MA, Chair

Mrs Sara Sullivan, Deputy Chair

Mrs Phyllida James

Mr Malcolm Kemp

Mrs Tajinder Leonard

Mrs Sue Parr (Resigned 26th May 2024)

Mrs Katie Roberts

Ms Yvonne Rowland

Ms Linda Taylor

Dr Rutang Thanawalla

Mr Thomas Wyman

Mr Ben Perrio, Advocate*

Chief Executive Officer and Senior Leadership Team

Mr Ben Ward FRSA, Chief Executive Officer

Miss Jo Hennessy, Director of Experiences

Mrs Emily Mace, Director of Engagement (Maternity: June 23 - May 24)

Mrs Charlotte Mercer, Director of Marketing and Communications

Miss Elizabeth Moorcraft FCMA, Director of Finance and Operations

Mrs Kate Wasche, Director of Fundraising

* An Advocate works alongside the Board of Trustees but does not have their legal responsibility for the Charity's governance.

Wonderseekers

Registered Office:

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www.wonderseekers.charity

www.linkedin.com/company/wonderseekers/

Registered Charity No. 294582

Registered Company No. 02014929