

Thames Valley

Environmental Records Centre



Sharing environmental information in Berkshire and Oxfordshire

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END OF YEAR REPORT

APRIL 2018 – MARCH 2019

CHAIR'S FOREWORD

In my foreword last year I predicted that the number of records held by TVERC would reach an important milestone of 2 million in the next year. Well I was wrong, due to the amazing work of our recording community and the hard work of the staff we have actually passed the 2.5 million mark which is an incredible achievement.

Underpinning this, TVERC is again in a strong financial position which is in part due to the continuing high levels of development activity in the Counties. This stability is important given the impending move to TVERC becoming independent from OCC in the coming year and the new challenges that this will bring.

This year we said goodbye to Graham Hawker who had been a stalwart of the team since the very beginning and it is in no small part due to Graham's clinical focus on the quality organisation of the records that TVERC is where it is today. I am sure you will join me in wishing Graham a long and happy retirement.

Over the coming year we will hopefully complete the separation from OCC and will be looking to re-locate the offices. This will be a significant upheaval for the team but, as always, I have faith the team will cope with the inevitable stresses and challenges this will bring.

Dominic Lamb MCIEEM
Countryside Officer, Planning
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2018-19 has been another busy year full of achievements and we have been working hard to meet the goals set out in our Business Plan. Everything we do is helping to achieve our tenth goal that “We live in a better environment in Berks and Oxon as a result of decisions made using our data and information.”

Thanks to everyone at TVERC, both staff and volunteers, and all of the individuals, groups and organisations in Oxfordshire and Berkshire who have helped us achieve so much.

- 1. Be independent** - We secured initial endorsement from the Planning and Place Leadership Team and the Portfolio Holder for the Environment for TVERC to separate, and for the Council to cover the costs of its staff time to enable the process. We also engaged a change consultant to provide the required additional capacity to enable this to happen, and the Director and Projects Manager drew up a project plan, and began to research the options around setting up and running a Community Interest Company.

We ended 2018-19 with a net surplus of £14.4k, which leaves TVERC in a strong position to continue to invest in improving our service, ensuring we are resilient to change and allowing us to move forwards with plans to become independent of OxonCC.

- 2. Maintain and continue to expand a database of high quality comprehensive environmental information** - We added 331,450 individual species records, which compares to 186,421 in 2017 and 192,050 in 2016. We now have a total of over 2.5 million species records, with 397,972 (15.12%) from the last 5 years. We received 417 data sets in 2018 and the records from 298 of these data sets (71%) were imported into our database during the same calendar year. If we look just at high priority data sets, the figure is 76%.
- 3. Maintain and engage with a broad customer base** - In 2018/19 we secured over £22k from customers other than local authorities, ecological consultants and the Environment Agency. Although this was lower than the previous year (about £30k), it is still a good amount, and we will continue to pursue this.
- 4. Develop and offer creative solutions to interpret natural environment data** – We carried out 5 projects in this area, including collating data from across the south-east for the National Trust, biodiversity offsetting calculation for an individual development in Oxfordshire and all proposed development sites in West Berkshire using our locally-specific calculator, habitat connectivity modelling for strategic planning and Neighbourhood Planning, and mapping linear habitats (hedgerows, ditches, running water) for Wokingham.
- 5. Collaborate or lead on research and innovation to drive our development** – We had two students from Oxford University and one group from Reading University. We also worked with the RSPB on their Oxford Swift City project.
- 6. Be a respected partner in providing evidence base for policies** – We carried out 61 Local Wildlife Surveys and carried out a major review and update of the LWS Selection Criteria. We also reviewing the Ancient Woodland Inventory in West Berkshire and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, mapped ponds in Wokingham, identified potential ‘City wildlife sites’ in Oxford, identified Green Corridors in Brize Norton and surveyed both Old Road Campus in Oxford and Stratton Audley Quarry. We also provided analysis for local authorities on the number of Local Wildlife Sites in positive management, and reported on a number of environmental indicators to help local authorities monitor biodiversity within their area.

We received 735 requests for data searches in 2018-2019. This was less than the previous year when we received 801 requests for data searches, and the year before it was 800. However the total income for data searches was £113.7k plus £23k for data licences in 2018-2019, which was higher than the previous year. We spent an average of 1.67 hours per data search in 2017-18 compared to an average of three to four hours in 2007-11 and almost two hours in 2012-2017. This leaves more time for collating, checking and importing data, and results in a greater quantity of data for our customers, and the highest quality data available.

7. **Remain at the centre of a network of recorders.** TVERC was approached by the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership to provide the secretariat for the group, which we are now providing. The TVERC Director is the current chair of the Oxfordshire Environment Board and also sits on the Oxfordshire Biodiversity Advisory Group. The TVERC Projects Manager is the current chair of the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership and regularly attends the Berkshire Local Authority Ecologists group.
8. **Provide valued support to, and engagement with, current and future recorders and partners.** We loaned equipment to several groups and provided funding, via Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment to two projects, totalling £1,400. We ran four training courses and two field days in addition to the Autumn and Spring conferences.
9. **Employ valued and respected staff who retain and develop their skills, expertise and knowledge.** We had several staff changes with Graham Hawker retiring and Katherine Lister moving up to Data Manager, Zoe leaving and being replaced by Joanna as our Biological Recording Coordinator, Filipa starting as our Admin Officer, and Robbie joining us as the new Data Assistant. Our 13 office volunteers contributed 172 hours of their time to help us with data management and other tasks.

Camilla Burrow, MCIEEM
TVERC Director

CONTENTS

Chair’s Foreword.....	2
Executive summary.....	3
Contents.....	5
Who are TVERC?	7
Mission Statement.....	7
Vision.....	8
Goals	8
1. Be Independent.....	9
Current governance and organisational arrangements	9
Changes in our environment	9
Factors now constraining TVERC	9
Progress made in 2018/19.....	10
2. Hold a database of high quality comprehensive environmental information	10
Species records	11
Datasets	13
3. Engage with a broad customer base.....	14
4. Use creative solutions to interpret natural environment data	15
National Trust	15
Linear habitats in Wokingham	16
Site assessments for West Berkshire	16
Wolvercote Mill offsetting.....	16
Habitat connectivity.....	16
5. Collaboration, research and innovation drives our development.....	17
Student research projects.....	17
RSPB Oxford Swift City	17
6. We are a respected partner in providing an evidence base for policies	18
Local Wildlife Sites	18
West Berks and RBWM Ancient Woodland Inventory	20
Local Sites for Wildlife and People	20
Wokingham Ponds mapping	20
Brize Norton NP Green Corridors	20
Oxford University Old Road Campus	21
Stratton Audley Quarry Survey	21

Data Searches	21
Data provision to partners	25
Berks Single Data List 160	25
Annual Monitoring Report	25
7. We remain at the centre of a network of recorders	26
Strategic Partnerships	26
Berkshire LNP Secretariat	26
8. Provide valued support to, and engagement with, current and future recorders and partners.....	26
Technical support.....	26
Equipment loan.....	26
Recording grant.....	28
Training & Networking Opportunities	29
9. Our valued and respected staff retain and develop their skills, expertise and knowledge	32
Office staff.....	32
External Contractors	33
Staff Changes	33
Reporting structure.....	34
Staff and Volunteer Time	35
Volunteers.....	35
Work areas.....	35
Income	37
Expenditure.....	39
Managing Financial Risk.....	40

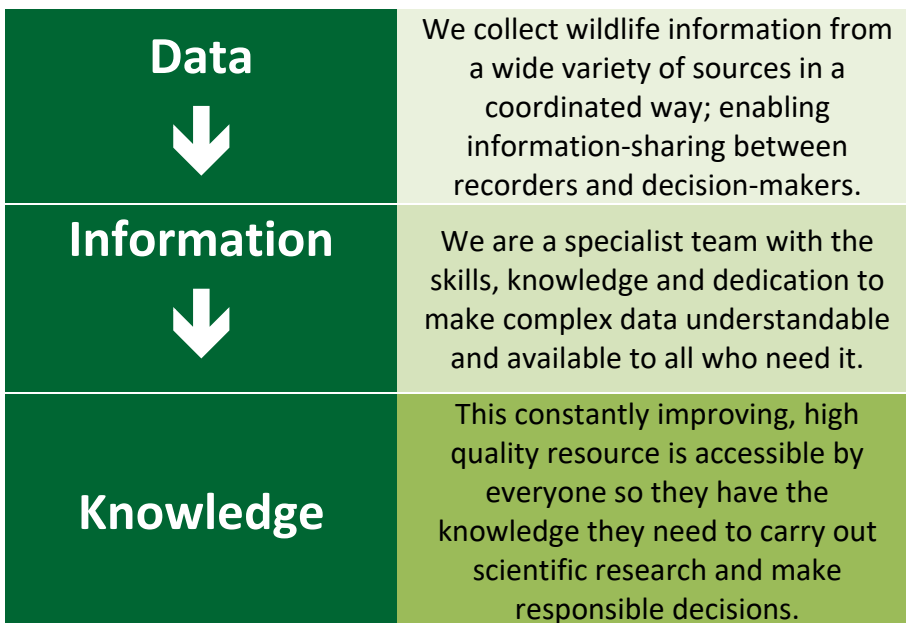
WHO ARE TVERC?

MISSION STATEMENT

TVERC is the only organization in Berkshire and Oxfordshire providing a comprehensive ecological information hub through which critical knowledge can be shared to support scientific research and responsible decision-making.

TVERC is at the centre of a network of recorders and data-users in Berkshire and Oxfordshire and is the regional delivery node of the National Biodiversity Network.

TVERC is a not-for-profit organisation run by a partnership. All those contributing to TVERC help manage our environmental resources sustainably for current and future use.



WHAT IS A LERC?



Local Environmental Record Centres are “*Not-for-profit organisations that collect, collate and manage information on the natural environment for a defined geographic area. LERCs support and collaborate with a network of experts to ensure information is robust, and make information products and services accessible to a range of audiences including decision-makers, the public, and researchers*”

Association of Local Environmental Records Centres (ALERC)

VISION

TVERC is an independent source of high quality comprehensive environmental information. Our broad customer base means we are financially sustainable and are able to provide strong evidence for environmental issues into the next generation.

TVERC is a leader in its field known for its creative solutions in interpreting the natural environment for a broad range of organisations and individuals who understand and value the work we do. Research and innovation as a result of collaboration drive our development so that we are a respected partner in providing an evidence base for policy.

TVERC is at the centre of a network of recorders and users providing valued support as part of a partnership and engages with a future generation of recorders.

Our team maintains strong connections with volunteers, recorders and partners. Together, we have the skills, expertise and knowledge to promote the recognition and value of local data in decision-making at all levels.

Our environment is better as a result of decisions made using our data and information.

GOALS

Working towards and ultimately achieving the following goals will ensure we achieve our future vision for TVERC.

1. Be independent
2. Maintain and continue to expand a database of high quality comprehensive environmental information
3. Maintain and engage with a broad customer base
4. Develop and offer creative solutions to interpret natural environment data.
5. Collaborate or lead on research and innovation to drive our development
6. Be a respected partner in providing evidence base for policies.
7. Remain at the centre of a network of recorders
8. Provide valued support to, and engagement with, current and future recorders and partners.
9. Employ valued and respected staff who retain and develop their skills, expertise and knowledge.
10. We live in a better environment in Berks and Oxon as a result of decisions made using our data and information.

1. BE INDEPENDENT

In 2017/18 TVERC concluded, with endorsement from its Steering Group, that its best interests would now be to separate from OxonCC and set up as a Community Interest Company (CIC). In 2018/19 we pursued this, whilst ensuring we continued to meet our vision to support recorders and enable decision-making.

CURRENT GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

TVERC operates as 'internal trading unit' hosted by Oxfordshire County Council (OxonCC), set up in 2003. It has a ring-fenced budget, and is a not-for-profit basis, self-funding with sustainable income. The Director runs TVERC as an independent business and has developed policies and procedures that are specific to TVERC and complement those provided by OxonCC. These include: detailed and comprehensive Data Policies and Procedures; TVERC Health, Safety and Well-being Procedures; the TVERC Business Plan; a Separation Strategy; a Communications Strategy; a Volunteer Management Policy; and an emerging Technology Roadmap.

TVERC has a Steering Group, comprising its key stakeholders, meeting three times per year. The Steering Group provides guidance on strategic direction, and reviews progress and risks.

As host, OxonCC provides support services. In the early years after TVERC was set up in 2003, this relationship worked well.

CHANGES IN OUR ENVIRONMENT

Much has changed in the last fifteen years.

Environmental record centres are no longer 'data libraries' funded primarily by grants. We are now a highly technical and successful data analysis business with income from a wide range of sources (local authorities, DEFRA, conservation organisations, developers, local communities).

FACTORS NOW CONSTRAINING TVERC

TVERC remains a small organisation, with minimal demands on its host. OxonCC has changed, and the previous benefits to TVERC of being hosted by OxonCC have eroded, such as employment stability for staff and ease of obtaining HR, Finance and IT support.

These are proving to be barriers to the successful running of TVERC, its potential future development, and achieving its vision.

During 2018/19, we secured initial endorsement from the Planning and Place Leadership Team and the Portfolio Holder for the Environment for TVERC to separate, and for the Council to cover the costs of its staff time to enable the process. We also engaged a change consultant to provide the required additional capacity to enable this to happen, and the Director and Projects Manager drew up a project plan, and began to research the options around setting up and running a Community Interest Company. The work fell under the following workstreams:

- Transition governance and project management
 - A. Legal
 - Insurance
 - B. HR
 - C. Payroll
 - D. Finance
 - E. ICT
 - F. Property & Facilities
 - G. Pensions
 - H. Governance for CiC

2. HOLD A DATABASE OF HIGH QUALITY COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

We hold over 2 million records of flora and fauna in Berkshire and Oxfordshire plus information about Local Wildlife and Geological Sites, NERC Act S41 Habitats of Principal Importance (previously called UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats) and Ecological Networks (Conservation Target Areas and Biodiversity Opportunity Areas).

We collect data from the general public, skilled volunteer/amateur recorders, professionals working for wildlife charities (BBOWT and RSPB), professionals working for government agencies (Natural England, the Environment Agency & local authorities) and ecological consultants. The cost to TVERC to collect, check and process data is about 25p per record, which means we prioritise datasets which are recent and include protected & notable species for data management.

SPECIES RECORDS

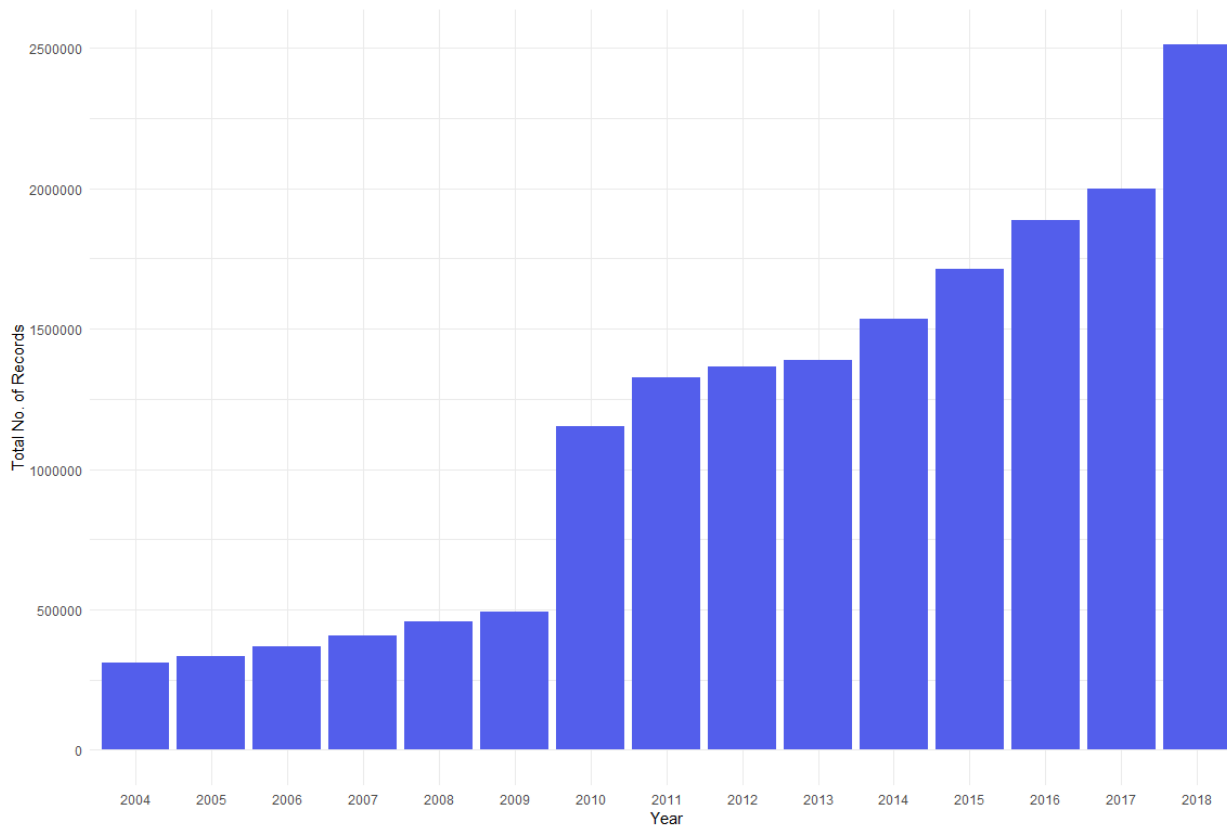
We added 331,450 individual species records, which compares to 186,421 in 2017 and 192,050 in 2016. We imported approximately the same number of data sets in 2018 as in 2017 BUT the difference was that in 2018 this included more LARGE data sets (17 with > 1k records and 7 with > 10k records). So the average number of records per imported data set rose from 502 in 2017 to 897 in 2018. Here are some highlights of what we've added to our database and what we currently hold in it.



Two of the groups that we have targeted for accelerated data entry are bats and great crested newts. Thanks to our office volunteers who trawl planning portals for ecological reports containing useful data, and those who beaver away checking and formatting data sets ready for entry, we have done a great job of adding records for these species over the last year. Between December 2017 and December 2018, we added 6,800 bat records and 1,000 GCN records (approx.) into our database.

NUMBER OF RECORDS

Year	Records added	Total No. of Records
pre-2004	112,749	112,749
2004	196,194	308,943
2005	24,949	333,892
2006	35,633	369,525
2007	38,497	408,022
2008	48,585	456,607
2009	36,652	493,259
2010	658,759	1,152,018
2011	174,389	1,326,407
2012	39,413	1,365,820
2013	23,503	1,389,323
2014	144,796	1,534,119
2015	177,549	1,711,668
2016	174,854	1,886,522
2017	112,084	1,998,606
2018	512,495	2,511,101



CURRENCY OF RECORDS

In 2018, approximately 442,000 (17%) of the 2.4 million TVERC species records were historic records more than 30 years old (pre-1989), with the remaining 83% being recorded in the last 30 years and 15% being recorded in the last 5 years.

5 Year Summary	No. of Records	% of data
Pre 1989	442,299	16.80%
1989 - 1993	242,154	9.20%
1994 - 1998	245,379	9.32%
1999 - 2003	336,872	12.80%
2004 - 2008	414,355	15.74%
2009 - 2013	553,480	21.02%
2014 - 2018	397,873	15.11%

Currency of records	Cumulative no. of Records	% of data
Over 30 years old	442,299	16.80%
Last 30 years	2,190,212	83.20%
Last 25 years	1,948,058	74.00%
Last 20 years	1,702,679	64.68%
Last 15 years	1,365,807	51.88%
Last 10 years	951,452	36.14%
Last 5 years	397,972	15.12%

DATASETS

We received 417 data sets in the calendar year 2018 of which 6 were in the form of printed paper (1.4%) and the vast majority were in electronic form. The records from 298 of these data sets (71%) were imported into our database during the same calendar year. If we look just at high priority data sets, the figure is 76%. We continued targeting planning portals in order to make sure that our records of species that are of special interest within the planning process are up to date. A total of 119 ecological reports containing species records were extracted from West Oxfordshire, Reading and West Berkshire planning portals and contained in the region of 3,000 records. Several large botanical data sets have been received and added to our database in 2018. We received 58,000 botanical records via our data exchange agreement with the BSBI recorder for VC23, David Morris. We also decided that 2018 was the year to tackle two large paper data sets that had been sitting in our files for a while, the Oxfordshire and Berkshire Churchyards project records from the 1990s, surveys organised and to a large extent carried out by Roy Maycock. Two volunteers, Nick Barber and Charlie Linton painstakingly extracted nearly 54,000 records from the recording sheets from these projects. As has been usual in recent years, we also received around 50,000 new records from BBOWT.

DATA AGREEMENTS

Each year, TVERC negotiate with the wide range of recorders and recording groups in Berkshire and Oxfordshire to ensure we can access new data.

New data agreements:

- Peoples Trust for Endangered Species - July 2018
- BSBI Oxon VC23 county recorder – April 2018

Groups which supplied TVERC with data

- Abingdon Naturalists Society
- Ashmolean Natural History Society Oxfordshire
- ARC Trust (Amphibian reptile conservation trust)
- ARGUK (Amphibian and reptile groups UK)
- BBOWT
- Berks & South Bucks Bat Group
- Berks Ornithological Club
- Binfield Badger Group
- BMERC (Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre)
- British Bryophyte Society
- British Dragonfly Society
- BSBI
- Butterfly Conservation
- Cherwell Swifts
- Friends of Lye Valley
- Friends of the Emm Brook

Renewed/amended data agreements

- Fungus Survey of Oxfordshire - March 2019
- Oxfordshire Badger Group – December 2018
- Binfield Badger Group – December 2018

- Fungus Survey of Oxfordshire
- GCER (Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records)
- Lower Windrush Valley Project
- Oxfordshire Ornithological Society
- Oxfordshire Bat Group
- Oxfordshire Flora Group
- Oxon Badger Group
- PTES (Peoples Trust for Endangered Species)
- Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
- River Thames Conservation Trust
- RSPB
- St. Mary's Field local group
- Wild Maidenhead
- Wildfowl & Wetland Trust
- Wychwood Flora Group



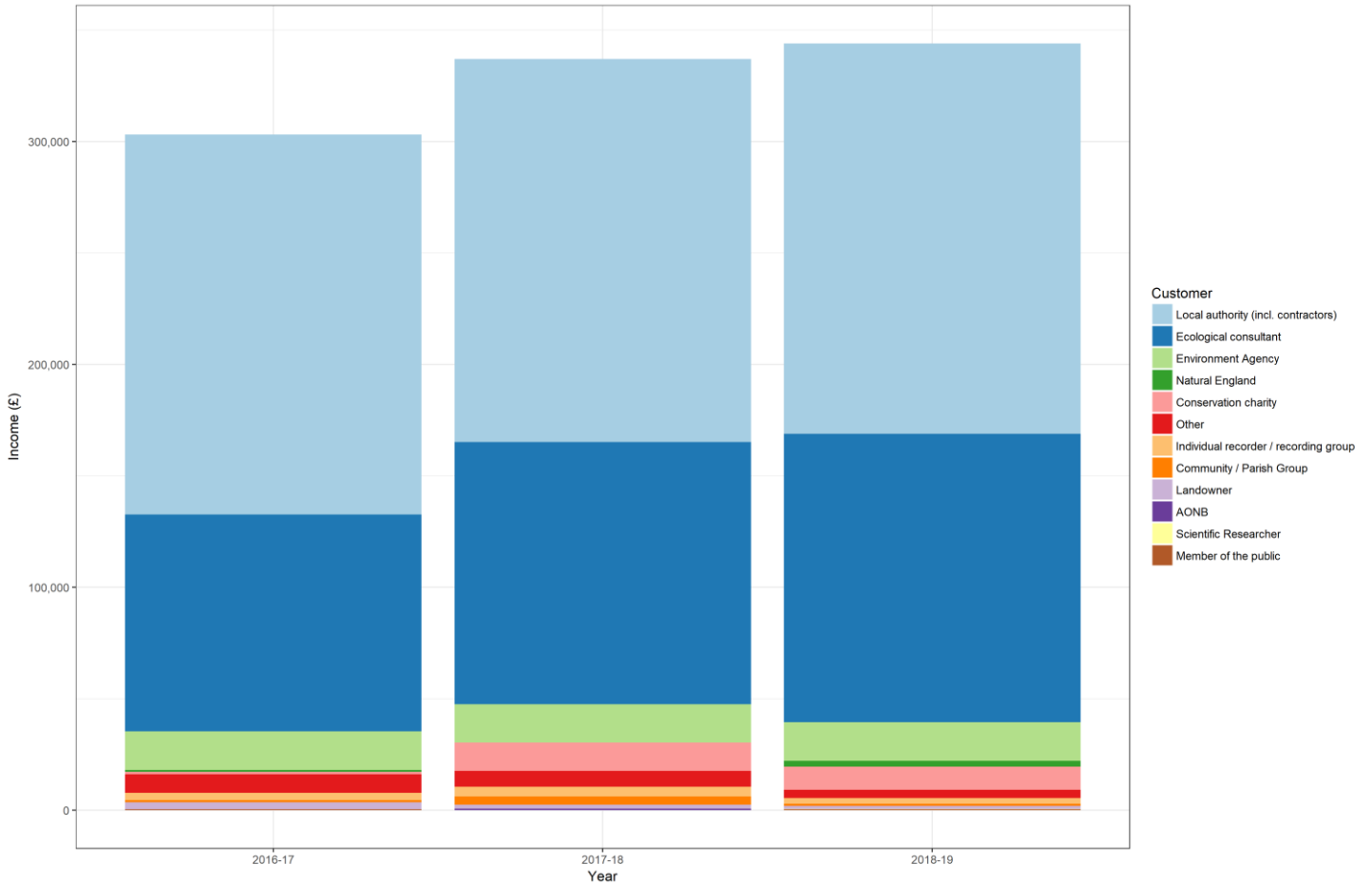
3. ENGAGE WITH A BROAD CUSTOMER BASE

Our data are used by a diverse customer base, but within this, TVERC is currently reliant on a small number of customers for the majority of our income. We are seeking to diversify our income stream by increasing income from other sectors such as community groups, conservation NGOs, university researchers, land management advisors and Parish & Town Councils. In 2018/19 we secured over £22k from customers other than local authorities, ecological consultants and the Environment Agency. Although this was lower than the previous year, it is still a good amount, and we will continue to pursue this.

TVERC Customers	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Local authority (incl. contractors)	£170,561	£171,825	£175,095
Ecological consultant	£97,249	£117,516	£129,460
Environment Agency	£17,280	£17,280	£17,280
Natural England	£825	£0	£2,663
Conservation charity	£1,050	£12,678	£10,380
Other	£8,448	£7,138	£3,570
Individual recorder / recording group	£3,267	£4,375	£2,682
Community / Parish Group	£950	£3,593	£995
Landowner	£3,170	£1,830	£1,310
AONB	£0	£642	£0
Scientific Researcher	£0	£0	£135
Member of the public	£390	£75	£455
TOTAL	£303,190	£336,952	£344,025
Total for "Top 3" customers	£285,090	306,621	321,836
Total for all others	£18,100	£30,331	£22,190



TVERC income by customer



4. USE CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO INTERPRET NATURAL ENVIRONMENT DATA

TVERC carried out several projects in 2018-19 which used creative solutions to interpret natural environment data for our customers. These new products and services, based on sound science, are trusted and respected by our partners and customers. These projects helped our customers make sound decisions about the location and design of new developments, and about how best to manage land to enhance biodiversity.

NATIONAL TRUST

TVERC are providing a management service on behalf of the South East LERCs to provide National Trust with data for all their sites in the south-east of England. TVERC also produced a summary report of habitat, species and sites on National Trust property in South East England.

This is as part of a pilot project ‘Playing our Part’ to deliver National Trust's ambitions for conservation across its estate in the UK.





LINEAR HABITATS IN WOKINGHAM

Wokingham Borough Council would like to map linear habitats (hedgerows, ditches, running water) in the borough for use in a number of different projects. TVERC have mapped habitats in Berkshire extensively and therefore already have good data for the area. However, the major gap in the data is mapping of linear habitats.

The linear habitat mapping will also allow further data to be collected, such as allowing Hedgerow Regulations assessments to be made of hedgerow sections and the location of hedgerow trees. We have completed the first stage of habitat mapping and we are now reviewing historic maps for the presence of hedgerows. Connectivity analysis has also commenced.

SITE ASSESSMENTS FOR WEST BERKSHIRE

West Berkshire Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan. As part of the Local Plan process, 250 proposed development sites have been identified. An assessment of each site for its suitability as a development location needs to be carried out for each of these sites.

TVERC carried out desk top assessments for all 250 potential development sites in the West Berkshire HELAA. TVERC also carried out Biodiversity Impact Assessments for those sites to calculate the likely change in biodiversity units as a result of development and outline costs for offsetting units lost. This assessment will help to prioritise ecological survey work and to help with the screening process for these sites

WOLVERCOTE MILL OFFSETTING

Developers are aware that they need to demonstrate 'net gain' in biodiversity when submitting a planning application. However, environmental consultants may not have the time or expertise to carry out these calculations. TVERC have developed a locally-specific calculator and use this to offer an offset-calculating service to developers (similar to the data search service).

TVERC carried out a biodiversity offsetting calculation for the Wolvercote Mill site in Oxford. This was a good test of TVERC systems for carrying out calculations for developers / consultants and this system is now up and running and available as a service on our website.

HABITAT CONNECTIVITY

Habitat connectivity describes the degree to which different patches of the same habitat are connected to each other, either physically or functionally. Maintaining and improving connectivity is one of the key principles identified by the Lawton Review that protected sites should be 'more joined up'.

TVERC have produced habitat connectivity maps for woodland grassland, wetland and heathland/acid grassland across our entire region. These data are being used by some Local Authorities in help with their planning work and TVERC has used in developing green corridors for some Neighborhood Planning groups. Four Local Authorities added these data to their SLAs in 2018-19.



5. COLLABORATION, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION DRIVES OUR DEVELOPMENT

TVERC believes that working closely with the fantastic science and environmental organisations in Berkshire and Oxfordshire is essential in order to maximise the impact we can collectively make on improving our environment.

STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

We have links with Imperial College London (Silwood Park), Oxford University, Oxford Brookes University and Reading University. These links work well for attracting student volunteers to carry out data management and project work, particularly for the 'Consultancy' modules in the MSc courses run by both Reading and Oxford Brookes Universities. In 2018-19 we had two students from Oxford University doing projects on habitat creation and restoration case studies and survey methods for species on Local Wildlife Sites. A team of students from the University of Reading carried out a rebranding project for TVERC.

RSPB OXFORD SWIFT CITY

TVERC is a partner of the Oxford Swift City project which aims to improve the outlook for swifts in Oxford, working to raise local awareness of the many ways that we can help these vulnerable birds.

TVERC created swift nest and foraging data sets for Oxford City Council. We also setting up a swift box recording scheme to support swift monitoring



6. WE ARE A RESPECTED PARTNER IN PROVIDING AN EVIDENCE BASE FOR POLICIES

Making policy relies on a robust evidence base. TVERC already provide trusted and scientifically robust evidence on which others base policy.

LOCAL WILDLIFE SITES

Local Wildlife Site surveys are one of the core services that TVERC continues to provide across the two counties for the majority of the Local Authorities. We carried out a total of 61 LWS surveys in 2018/19. Thanks to the help of our volunteers, specialist species group surveys were completed on several sites for birds, invertebrates and rare plants. Survey reports were produced and taken to the site selection panel. The full detail of these is in appendix I. TVERC also carried out a major review and update of the LWS selection criteria. The updated criteria was used in the selection panels at the beginning of 2019.

OXFORDSHIRE SURVEYS

This year TVERC carried out surveys of 42 existing and proposed Local Wildlife Sites in Oxfordshire. Thanks to the help of our volunteers, specialist species group surveys were completed on several sites for invertebrates and rare plants. We visited an ex-quarry site near Bicester that had a fine example of open mosaic habitat on previously developed land. It included areas of early successional vegetation, bare ground, ponds, marshy areas, rough grassland and scrub. Interesting plants found here include narrow-leaved bird's-foot-trefoil, southern marsh orchid and common stork's-bill. There were many butterflies including Grizzled Skipper, Dingy Skipper, Brimstone, Common Blue, Small Heath, Marbled White, Meadow Brown, Ringlet and Small Copper.

In June we surveyed Peppard Common in the Chilterns. The site is mainly wooded with open sections of acid grassland and areas of heather including ling and bell heather. The woodland is not considered ancient but has species typical of long established woodland such as slender St. John's-wort, yellow archangel, wood sorrel, sanicle, wood melick, wood millet and wood meadow-grass. The grassland includes many species indicative of acidic soils with sheep's sorrel, heath wood-rush, pill sedge, wavy hair-grass, tormentil and heath bedstraw.



BERKSHIRE SURVEYS

In 2018 a total of 19 existing Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) were surveyed in Berkshire. A variety of habitats were surveyed across these sites, including woodland, heathland, fen, grassland and hedgerow. Particularly interesting sites of the season included Streatley Golf Course LWS and Edgbarrow Hill and Heath LWS. Streatley Golf Course LWS is a large site in West Berkshire comprising several habitats including woodland, scrub, tall herb and ponds; its primary interest, however, is areas of calcareous grassland which are rich in species typical to this priority habitat type. Species recorded include pyramidal orchid, kidney vetch, common centaury, dwarf thistle, eyebright, pale toadflax, marjoram, salad burnet, common restharrow, common spotted-orchid, cowslip, fairy flax, hairy violet, mouse-ear hawkweed, yellow-rattle and yellow-wort. Edgbarrow Hill and Heath LWS is another diverse large site in the Bracknell Forest area. The acid soils of this site host some less commonly seen plants in Berkshire; in addition, the range of water drainage and active site management has allowed a variety of habitats to develop across this site. Habitats include acid woodland, heathland, fen, acid grassland and ponds; and species found here include bilberry, bristle bent, broom, gorse, heather, pill sedge, sheep's sorrel, tormentil, wavy-hair grass, wood sage, narrow buckler-fern, heath-grass, cross-leaved heath, bell heather, bog pimpernel, bog pondweed, green-ribbed sedge and hard-fern.



WEST BERKS AND RBWM ANCIENT WOODLAND INVENTORY

TVERC prepared updated data for the ancient woodland inventory (AWI) in West Berkshire and Windsor & Maidenhead. The updated AWI, mapping the quality, extent and distribution of ancient woodland, will include sites under 2 ha (which were excluded from the original AWI) and provide a robust evidence base to help inform planning decisions, strategic plans and various environmental projects, such as planning for strategic infrastructure, considering planning applications, directing habitat conservation work, climate change adaptation and mitigation and wood-fuel initiatives. The work involves using GIS analysis of modern and historic maps, supported by field work, to assess whether currently wooded sites were likely have been wooded since at least 1600 and subsequently considered to be ancient woodland.

LOCAL SITES FOR WILDLIFE AND PEOPLE

Oxford City Council is in the process of creating a new Local Plan to replace the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016, the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 and the Sites and Housing Plan. As part of this process sites that have significant biodiversity value need to be identified.

In 2017/18 Oxford City Council commissioned TVERC to undertake some preliminary surveys of sites in Oxford to determine which are likely to have biodiversity interest, as part of the Local Plan work. TVERC developed the selection criteria the previous year, and in 2018/19 any sites identified as having the potential for biodiversity interest were surveyed and taken to the selection panel.

WOKINGHAM PONDS MAPPING

Wokingham Borough Council commissioned TVERC to provide an up-to-date map of ponds for the region. The project will allow the Council to begin the process of planning for a potential change in the way Natural England issue European Protected Species licences, when such species are affected by development. Natural England are proposing to move towards a landscape approach to favourable conservation status for Great Crested Newts (GCN), whereby there is a coordinated approach to protecting and enhancing habitats for Great Crested Newts rather than a case-by-case approach to mitigating and compensating for the impacts of development on individual newts.

TVERC has completed this project and sent an updated ponds layer to Wokingham Borough Council.

BRIZE NORTON NP GREEN CORRIDORS

Green corridors are corridors that allow people and wildlife to move through the landscape. They are important both in connecting patches of habitat to allow wildlife to find food, homes and mates, but also in helping people to access the countryside and to experience wildlife first hand.

Many Neighbourhood Plans are identifying green corridors and including policies which specifically address the protection, creation and enhancement of new and existing green corridors. TVERC have identified and mapped green corridors for Brize Norton Neighbourhood Plan Group.



OXFORD UNIVERSITY OLD ROAD CAMPUS

The University of Oxford's Biodiversity Strategy 2016-2020 outlines how it will ensure biodiversity on University land is both protected and enhanced. The University commissioned a Biodiversity Assessment Report which identified four sites that will provide the main focus for activity during this period. The University of Oxford have asked Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) to provide advice and recommendations for biodiversity enhancements that could be implemented on Old Road Campus.

STRATTON AUDLEY QUARRY SURVEY

Stratton Audley Quarry Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is an abandoned and partly restored sand quarry. It has not been worked for a number of years and has developed considerable biodiversity interest.

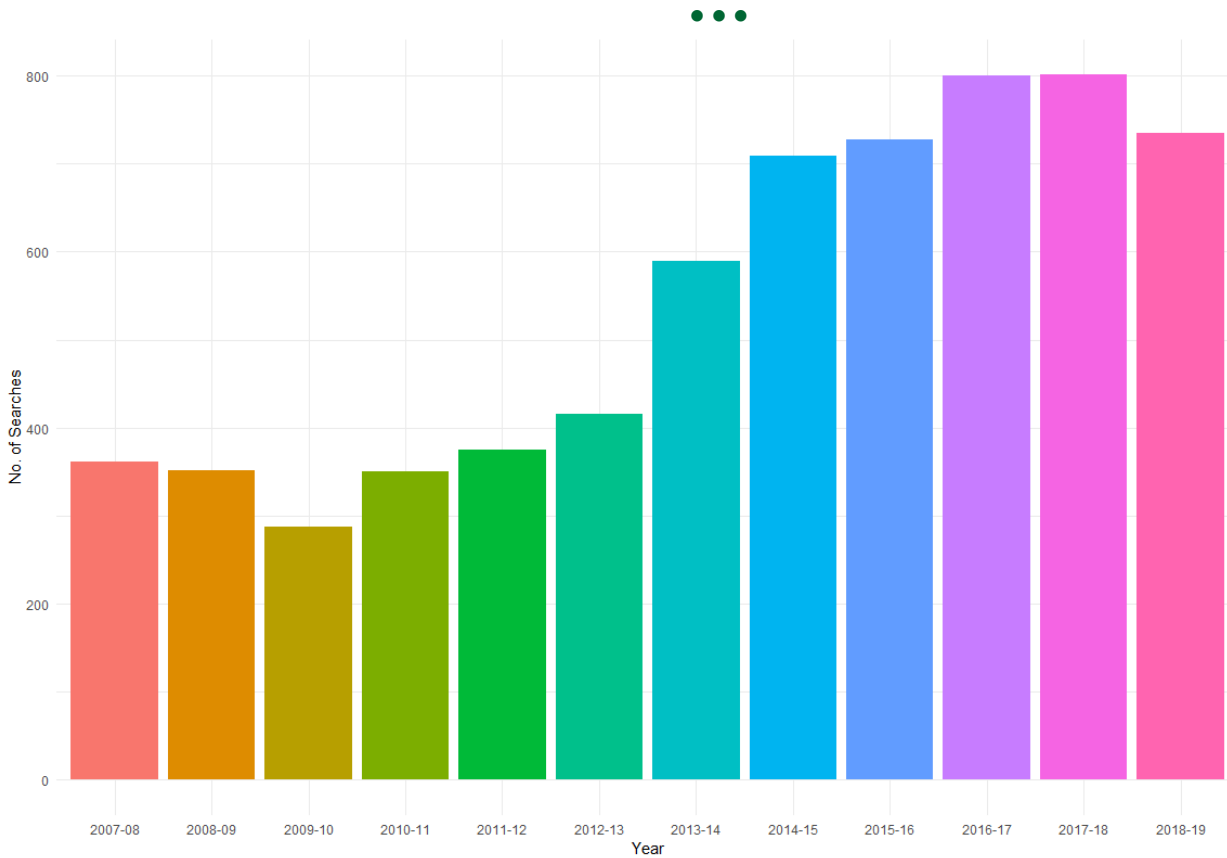
Oxfordshire County Council have asked TVERC to carry out a survey of Stratton Audley Quarry LWS so that potential impacts on the sites wildlife interest can be assessed under different possible management options.

DATA SEARCHES

We have continued to improve our data search processes to automate many of the tasks for extracting and supplying data. We are now spending less time on these tasks, only 166 days this year compared to 198 in 2017-2018. This leaves more time for collating, checking and importing data, and results in a greater quantity of data for our customers, and the highest quality data available. We spent an average of 1.67 hours per data search in 2017-18 compared to an average of three to four hours in 2007-11 and almost two hours in 2012-2017.

We have moved to a clearer charging structure for the most commonly requested data searches that doesn't require a quote to be issued by TVERC and signed by the requestor which should save even more time and allow requestors to instantly see the cost of their search report. The new online form allowed us to add more options for requestors for additional datasets (e.g. SSSI risk zones and Ancient Woodland Inventory sites). TVERC received 735 requests for data searches in 2018-2019. This was less than the previous year when we received 801 requests for data searches, and the year before it was 800.

End of Year Report 2018-19



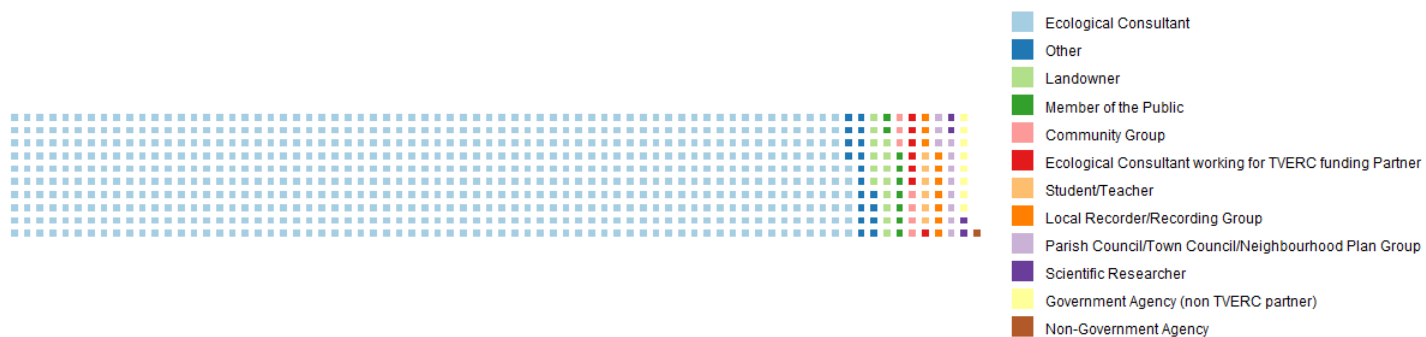
TVERC charges for data searches based on the time to extract and present the data and a contribution towards the annual cost of collating and managing the TVERC database. TVERC waive this charge in some circumstances, and sometimes customers cancel requests before they are completed and charged for. So although we received 735 requests for data, a charge was made for only 695 of these, bringing in a total income of £113.7k for data searches and £23k for data licences in 2018-2019, which was higher than the previous year. We also supplied data to Thames Water under their five-year agreement with us.

A variety of customers request data searches, although the vast majority come from ecological consultants (656 this year, which is 89%). The proportions can be seen in the table below.

End of Year Report 2018-19



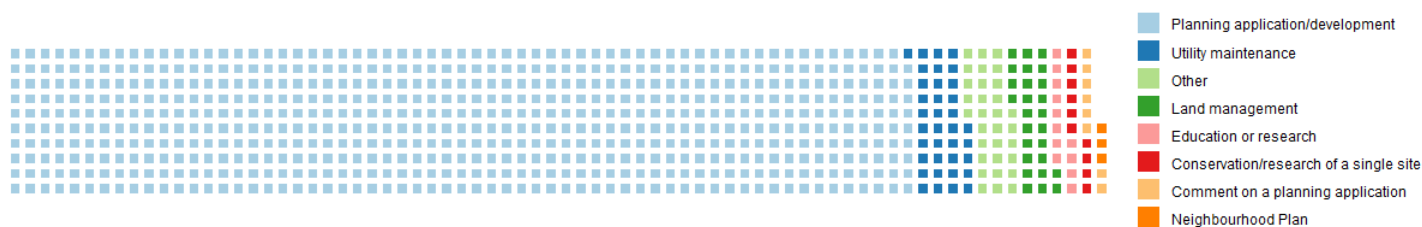
Customer Type	2017-18 Searches	2017-18 Percentage	2018-19 Searches	2018-19 Percentage
Ecological Consultant	691	86%	656	89%
Other	89	11%	18	2.4%
Landowner	14	1.7%	14	1.9%
Member of the Public	0	0.0%	9	1.2%
Community Group	7	0.9%	7	1.0%
Ecological Consultant working for TVERC funding Partner	0	0.0%	7	1.0%
Student/Teacher	0	0.0%	7	1.0%
Local Recorder/Recording Group	0	0.0%	6	0.8%
Parish Council/Town Council/Neighbourhood Plan Group	0	0.0%	5	0.7%
Scientific Researcher	0	0.0%	4	0.5%
Government Agency (non TVERC partner)	0	0.0%	1	0.1%
Non-Government Agency	0	0.0%	1	0.1%



End of Year Report 2018-19



Reason for Search	2017-18 Searches	2017-18 Percentage	2018-19 Searches	2018-19 Percentage
Planning application/development	656	82%	609	83%
Utility maintenance	19	2.4%	36	4.9%
Other	73	9%	31	4.2%
Land management	35	4.4%	26	3.5%
Education or research	17	2.1%	12	1.6%
Conservation/research of a single site	0	0%	10	1.4%
Comment on a planning application	0	0%	8	1.1%
Neighbourhood Plan	1	0.1%	3	0.4%





DATA PROVISION TO PARTNERS

TVERC provided updated datasets to our partners. These are essential to ensure that our partners comply with planning policy and wildlife legislation and that sound decisions are made about where to focus conservation effort, how best to manage land and where to direct development to minimise impacts on the natural environment.

The updated datasets TVERC provided to partners were:

- Protected & notable species (July 2018 & January 2019)
- Buffered protected species & notable (January 2019)
- Local Wildlife Sites (May 2018)
- UK Priority Habitat (NERC Act S41 Habitats of Principle Importance) (January 2019)
- Invasive non-native species layer (July 2018, January 2019)

There were no changes to the following datasets:

- Conservation Target Areas / Biodiversity Opportunity Areas
- Local Geological Sites

BERKS SINGLE DATA LIST 160

TVERC provide an analysis of the SDL 160 for each of the Berkshire unitaries. Site management data is collated to calculate the number of local sites that are in positive management for the 6 Unitary Authorities. Local authorities are required to report to DEFRA on the SDL 160 each year as a measure of their success of protecting the biodiversity in their area.

ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

TVERC analyse environmental data and produce an annual monitoring report to Local Authorities in Berkshire and Oxfordshire. The AMR reports on a number of environmental indicators that help to monitor biodiversity within their district including changes to Local Wildlife Sites, Priority habitat and Priority Species, the status and distribution of water vole or farmland birds, SSSI condition and non agri-schemes habitat creation and management.



7. WE REMAIN AT THE CENTRE OF A NETWORK OF RECORDERS

TVERC has good relationships with local recorders and recording groups who are a key source of our data. We will strengthen these relationships so that TVERC remains the hub for biological recording in Berkshire and Oxfordshire.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The TVERC Director is the current chair of the Oxfordshire Environment Board and also sits on the Oxfordshire Biodiversity Advisory Group. The TVERC Projects Manager is the current chair of the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership and regularly attends the Berkshire Local Authority Ecologists group.

BERKSHIRE LNP SECRETARIAT

The Combined Board & Steering Group of the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership agreed that there was insufficient budget and no line management structure in place to support the employment of another LNP officer and that the work plan was too ambitious for a part time officer to manage. It was agreed that until such time as sufficient funding and line management was available that there was little value in recruiting another LNP officer. TVERC was approached to provide the secretariat for the group. As such the LNP will act as a networking partnership for those working in nature conservation, business and health & wellbeing to share best practice, highlight work by other LNPs and advertise funding opportunities.

8. PROVIDE VALUED SUPPORT TO, AND ENGAGEMENT WITH, CURRENT AND FUTURE RECORDERS AND PARTNERS

Biological recorders are essential to the future success of TVERC and to evidence-based decision making. Much of the data in the TVERC database comes from volunteer recorders and so supporting them is an essential part of the work TVERC carry out.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

We provide technical support for recording groups who are collecting and analysing data across Oxfordshire and Berkshire.

EQUIPMENT LOAN

We have survey equipment and books available to loan to recorders, and this is advertised on our website. In 2018/19 we loaned equipment to

End of Year Report 2018-19



- Witney Woodland Volunteers
- Lower Windrush Valley Project
- Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew



RECORDING GRANT

At the beginning of 2016, we reinstated our Recorders Grant Scheme to support projects that improve the quality, quantity and/or coverage of voluntary species recording in Berkshire and Oxfordshire. The fund is administered by Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE). Applications may be standalone grants to support better recording or they may be linked to a larger biodiversity application to TOE (www.trustforoxfordshire.org.uk). In 2018/19 we funded the following projects:

13/06/2018	Surveys for Pale Shining Brown Moth	£900.00
13/06/2018	Year 2 of High Park Biodiversity Survey	£500.00

Surveys for Pale Shining Brown Moth

Description - To undertake a targeted survey of the Pale Shining Brown Moth, (*Polia bombycina*), a species of high conservation concern in the UK following significant declines over the last forty years. The area being targeted is one of the few remaining strongholds for this species but infrequent surveying of the area means we have few positive records. We aim to work closely with local farmers to promote suitable management, such as enhancing and maintaining sufficient nectar sources and applying appropriate hedgerow management.

Outcome - Surveys began during the 2018 flight period and have taken place at two locations where the moth was recorded in the early 2000s. The moth was not recorded but all other trapped moths were recorded and the data is being compiled. More surveys are planned for 2019, focussing on the area around the Evenlode.

The timing of the grant was very close to the start of the moth's flight period. By continuing in to 2019 we will have more time to plan the season's search, identify promising key sites to survey and engage with landowners. The results will be compiled and shared with TVERC and with the County Moth Recorder. The group would be happy to share results via a variety of means including articles and presentations.

High Park Biodiversity Survey, Blenheim

Description - To describe all aspects of High Park, beginning with geology and soils, then archaeology, history, the landscape, the trees (especially the ancient and veteran oaks and also other ancient trees on the site), the other flora including vascular plants and bryophytes, mycology including lichenised and non-lichenised fungi, the fauna including invertebrates (e.g. molluscs, spiders, insects especially saproxylic beetles but also butterflies and moths as well as Diptera, Hemiptera and Hymenoptera) and vertebrates (amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals among which bats and deer, with a history for the latter from park deer to feral and wild) and concluding with management and conservation of this most important site for ancient oaks in England and an SSSI as well as part of a World Heritage Site.

The aim is to conduct a survey of all macro-biodiversity across the Animal, Fungal and Plant Kingdoms in the SSSI of High Park (c. 120 ha) within Blenheim Park, Oxfordshire. Information about its geology, history and past management will also be gathered. The data collected are to be submitted to TVERC and will be used to describe High Park in a book to be published in collaboration with Blenheim Park, Natural England and possibly other sponsors. The book will be multiple-authored and edited by Aljos Farjon.

The funds are used to support travel costs for the volunteers.



Outcomes - The survey started in February 2017 and is being carried out over a four year period with input from a large number of volunteers. Survey work that took place on 2017 was built on in 2018 with groups such as butterflies, beetles, amphibians and reptiles, which had been under recorded in 2017, strengthened with more volunteers and better recording techniques. Butterflies are now being recorded by local volunteers. Flight interception traps in ancient hollow oaks are being checked by entomologists and several rarities have been identified. An early June mycological survey recorded numerous fungi species on dead oak wood, and this has become a focus of the survey.

TRAINING & NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

TVERC organise a local Recorders Conference to share information amongst volunteer recorders and increase their knowledge so they can provide us with even better data. We also provide training courses and talks to local groups.

TRAINING COURSES

To help increase identification skills, surveying techniques and encourage wildlife recording within Berkshire and Oxfordshire through running a number of day training courses on a wide range of species and habitats.

In 2018/19 we carried out three training courses on:

- Bird Survey Techniques in April at BBOWT Chimney Meadows - Led by Caroline Coleman
- Otter Ecology and Surveying in September at RSPB Otmoor reserve - Led by Ellen Lee
- Identikit at BBOWT Woolley Firs Maidenhead in November – Led by FSC and TVERC

And two Recorder Field Days on:

- Birds and other wildlife in May at St Mary's Fields and Kidlington Meadows – Led by Zoe Caals
- Invertebrates in July at BENHS, Dinton Pastures – led by Dan Carpenter



ETHOS EP NET GAIN TRAINING

Ethos is a multi-disciplinary environmental planning consultancy providing specialist advice to inform decision making for planning and development. Ethos works on a range of projects from local community initiatives to major housing and regeneration developments.

As a successful environmental planning consultancy, Ethos EP are engaged in a number of development applications across the UK. Therefore, there is a need for Ethos staff to understand the current net gain environment and the processes used by LPAs to secure these net gains. Ethos have asked TVERC to deliver some training on the background, policy and practice of biodiversity net gain.

AUTUMN RECORDERS CONFERENCE – BERKSHIRE

We held our Autumn Recorders' Conference on 29th September at Oracle, Thames Valley Park in Reading.

We had a brilliant day with lots of interesting speakers and many people commented on the opportunities that events like this provide for networking, and hearing from other local groups about their work and ways to collaborate.

Chris Woodham from the University of Oxford told us about his research into the biodiversity value of the Ridgeway which has included setting up experimental plots to compare different methods of managing chalk grassland, and using high-quality drone photos to map habitat types.

Owen Green from the Oxfordshire Geology Trust gave us a fascinating talk about the geological history of Berkshire and Oxfordshire.

In the afternoon we split into groups to take part in workshops on Hedgerows, Otters, Spiders and Craneflies. Thanks to all our expert workshop leaders who gave us a chance to learn something new.

We also had an update from the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership about their activities and plans for the future.

Thank you to all who took part, whether giving a talk, bringing a display or just by coming along! Thank you also to Oracle for kindly hosting our conference.

If you would like to get in touch with a local group, take a look at our directory here: [recording/wildlife groups](#).



SPRING RECORDERS CONFERENCE – OXFORDSHIRE

This year, our spring conference was on 2nd March 2019 and was once again held in at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology in Wallingford. We had a very successful turnout with over 80 individuals joining us who were all keen to hear from and learn about the work of other local wildlife groups.

To kick start the day, we heard from Dan Carpenter who gave a presentation on data management within TVERC and some of the projects that are currently in action. Since 2014 TVERC have received nearly 2,000 datasets, which with the help of our staff and volunteers has meant we have dedicated 1,500 days to data management. All this hard work ensures that when you receive data from us, it'll be easily accessible, high quality data.

Our two main speakers of the day were Francesca Dunn from Freshwater Habitats Trust and Aljos Farjon from the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew. Francesca gave a wonderful overview of a new project FHT have started, '[Saving Oxfords Wetland Wildlife](#)'. We learnt about the importance of Oxford as a stronghold for multiple fresh water species and the part smaller habitats play, such as ponds, in hosting freshwater species. There are a variety of aspects the project involves, these include: breeding rare plants offsite, eDNA surveys for biodiversity, water quality testing and monitoring for rare plants and invertebrates. FHT are keen for new volunteers to get involved in the project.

Aljos introduced us to the world of biodiversity within High Park (Blenheim). Surprisingly, High Park is the best site in Europe for ancient trees, some of which have an impressive circumference of over 9 meters! His survey has been very successful, and with the help of his volunteers they have found over 2,000 species of plant, fungi and animals. These records include several rare plant and fungi species and even some new moth records for Oxfordshire.

We held four fantastic workshops in the afternoon which gave everybody a variety of topics to attend. **Moths throughout the year** was hosted by Vikki Rose and looked at the ever changing 'moth menu', including a few distinctive caterpillars and eggs. **Hydrology of the fens** was run by Rod d'Ayala, he spoke about the Oxon Fen Project and the restoration work they are doing to conserve the wetlands. Roselle Chapman and Izzy Bishop spoke about the **Thames Waterblitz** project and are still looking to recruit citizen scientists to build on this work of water surveying. You can register [here](#). Finally, the workshop on **British reptiles** was held by Neil Clennel, he introduced us to the UK's reptile species, their ecology and habitat preferences

The speed updates were refreshing, bite sized talks given by local wildlife groups to update the audience on their recent or current projects. Below are some of the upcoming events and volunteering opportunities that were mentioned:

- Biolinks are running a joint field day with TVERC at Dinton Pastures and are running courses in Berkshire on millipedes, flies and spiders.
- BTO have empty BBS squares that need surveyors, for 2019 these are to include farm woodland and urban gulls. You can find out more [here](#).
- Oxford Swift City are setting up a group to keep their swift box project going. If you want to get involved please email: oxfordswiftcity@rspb.org.uk



- Henley wildlife group are continuing to carry out surveys for Oxfordshire Flora Atlas
- Naturehood have an earth watch project where they are gathering data at a neighbourhood level to promote action in gardens.
- The Oxon Mammal group are running a tracks and signs workshop to promote the use of Mammal Mapper app for recording tracks and signs.

We would like to thank everyone who attended the conference, with a special thanks to the main speakers (Francesca and Aljos), our workshop hosts, anyone who gave a talk or brought along a display on the day. We would also like to thank CEH for their support with hosting the conference.

9. OUR VALUED AND RESPECTED STAFF RETAIN AND DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS, EXPERTISE AND KNOWLEDGE

OFFICE STAFF

We are a team of ten people, but as some of us work part-time, this is equivalent to 8.7 full-time staff.

Camilla Burrow, Director - Development and delivery of the TVERC service.

Dan Carpenter, Projects Manager – Delivering services to our local authority partners in Berkshire and Oxfordshire and developing and managing project work.

Katherine Lister and Ellen Lee, Biodiversity Data Managers - Data management, analysing and presenting data for commercial customers and project work

Julie Kerans and Katherine Holmes, Oxfordshire and Berkshire Biodiversity Officers - Surveying local wildlife sites with the help of volunteers, analysing and presenting data for project work.

Yolanda Vazquez, Biodiversity Projects Officer - Surveying local wildlife sites (KH maternity cover), analysing and presenting data for project work.

Joanna Clark, Biological Recording Coordinator – Working with TVERC volunteers and recording groups to increase the quality and quantity of wildlife records and build up the volunteer network.

Filipa McGuinness, Admin Officer - Finance, admin & promotional tasks to ensure the smooth running of a busy office.

Robbie Still, Biodiversity Data Assistant - Data management, presenting data for commercial customers and project work.



EXTERNAL CONTRACTORS

In 2018/19 we secured the services of Biswas Consulting to provide additional capacity for work on separating from OxonCC (6 days in total).

We also continued to use Andy Foy Consulting (29 days; a decrease from the previous year of 56.5 days) to help us with various aspects of data management and provision, whilst at the same time working internally on how we can carry out all these processes entirely in-house in the future, using open source software such as R for Data Science, QGIS and Shiny.

STAFF CHANGES

We have had some changes in our team over the last year. Graham Hawker our TVERC Data Services Officer left for early retirement and will be much missed, being one of the founder members of TVERC. We welcomed Filipa McGuinness to TVERC in August as our Admin Officer and Katherine Lister progressed from being our Data Assistant to our Data Manager, so Robbie Still joined TVERC as our new Data Assistant at the beginning of November. Zoe Caals, our Biological Recording Co-ordinator left us to move nearer to her family in Dorset and so we also welcomed Joanna Clark in February 2019.

GRAHAM HAWKER

“After 15 years, I’m leaving TVERC. This leaves Ellen as the only remaining ‘original’ member but unfortunately, she doesn’t get a prize. I’m off into semi-retirement, with a little gardening work, getting out and about doing habitat surveys for my own interest, which is where it all began back in the 1980s. They’ll be other stuff as well like spending more time with my banjos and probably doing some voluntary work for TVERC. I don’t intend on leaving the whole wildlife conservation thing behind. While lots of things have changed, especially the technology, it’s still the recorders and the recording that counts and I’m going to try to do more of that. “

ZOE CAALS

"I have enjoyed learning about the fantastic work done by local conservation groups around Oxfordshire and Berkshire and getting to know some of you through our recorders’ conferences and other events. I am now moving to Dorset and am looking forward to dusting off my books on seaweeds and marine animals and learning more about coastal wildlife."

FILIPA MCGUINNESS

Filipa has a degree in applied zoology where she took part in embryo transfer viability in cows and cat bonding research. During her studies she volunteered in Newquay Zoo and Cornwall Nature Conservancy. Subsequently she worked in various roles as quality assistant, product developer and admin. Filipa currently lives on a farm where she is enjoying all aspects of dealing with animals and surrounding wildlife.



ROBBIE STILL

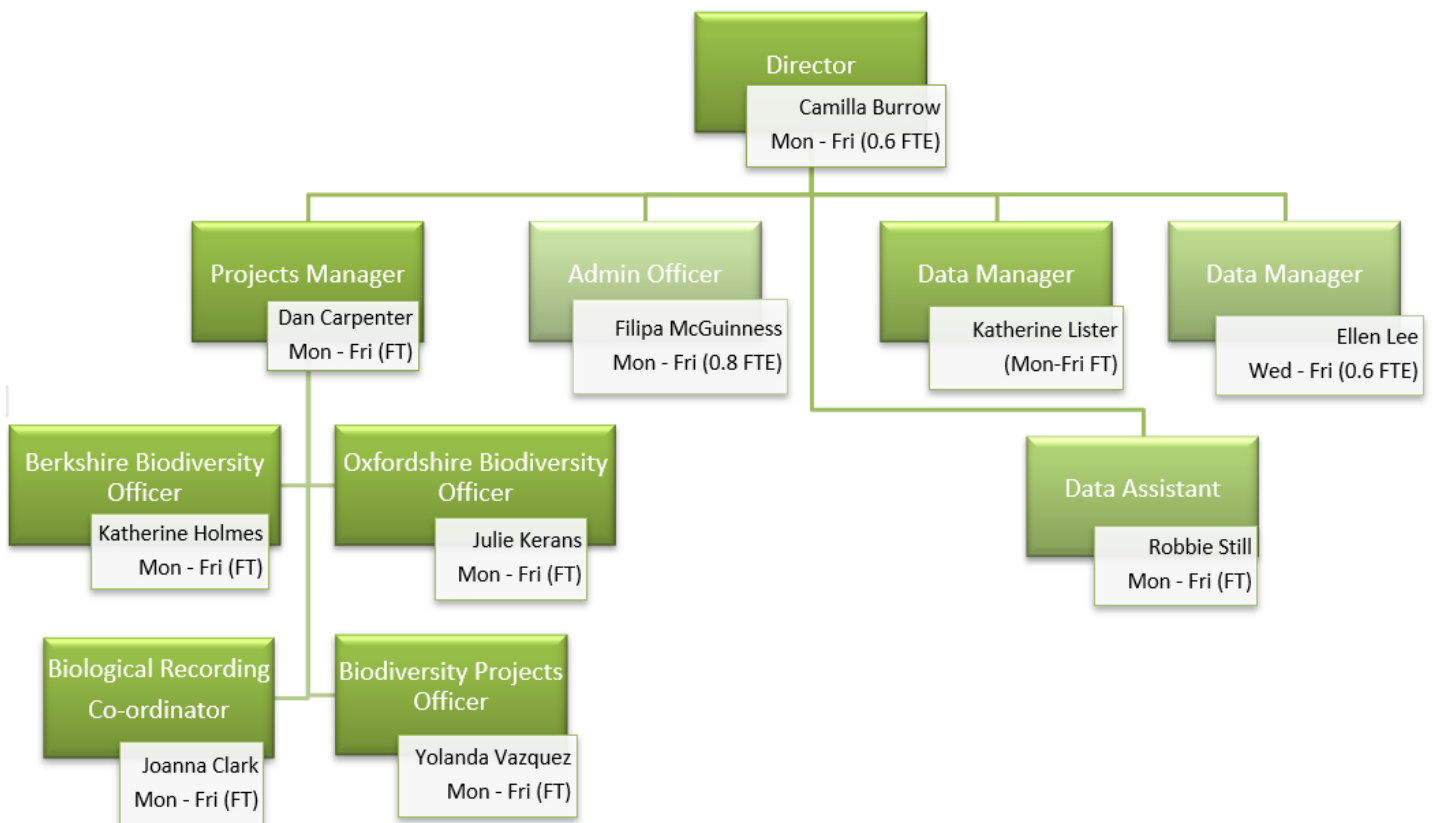
Robbie has just finished a masters at Swansea University focusing on GIS analysis of Himalayan Balsam distribution, and has focused on terrestrial invasive plant species, although his undergraduate degree was more broadly based on British ecology. Robbie has also worked with the City and Council of Swansea, updating their records of Japanese Knotweed populations throughout the Gower Peninsula on an internship last summer. Robbie is from High Wycombe, so is familiar with the local area and wildlife despite studying in South Wales.

JOANNA CLARK

Joanna carried out her studies in Manchester where she completed her degree in Zoology and Masters in Conservation Biology. In her undergraduate degree she did projects in Science Communications which led her to volunteer at the Manchester Museum as a Scientific Communicator to the public. Joanna also got involved with the IUCN SSC Antelope Specialist Group for her Masters project, she now works as a Volunteer Project Officer and helps manage the social media outlets in her spare time. Joanna is looking forward to getting to know the biological recorders and learning more about the work done by local conservation groups.

REPORTING STRUCTURE

Our reporting structure remained the same in 2018-19, apart from some staff changes.





STAFF AND VOLUNTEER TIME

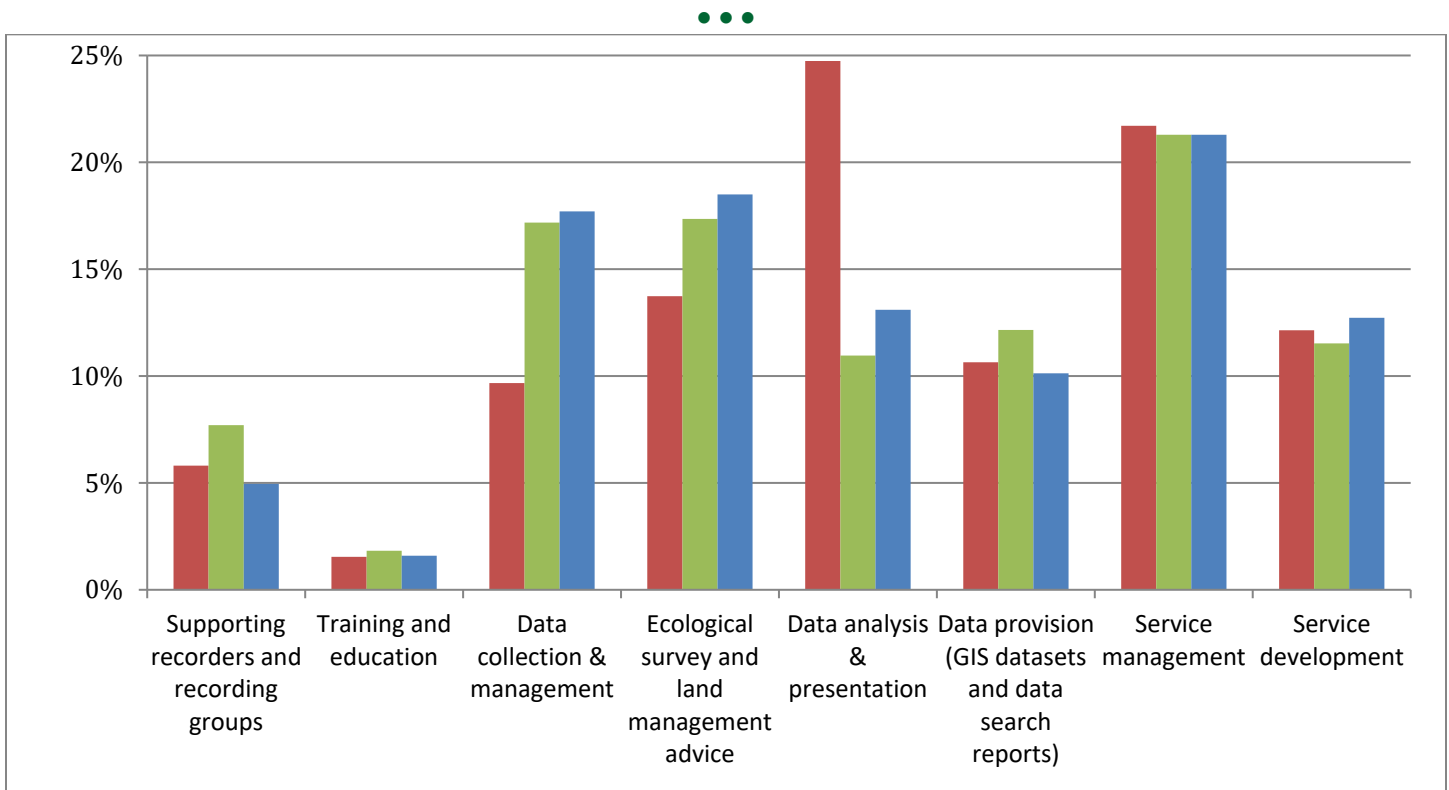
The chart and table below illustrate the time spent by the TVERC team on different elements of the TVERC work programme during 2018-19. The graph shows a decrease in the amount of time spent on supporting recorders, but this is due to the Volunteer Coordinator post being vacant for six months while we recruited a replacement. We are very hopeful that once TVERC is a Community Interest Company recruitment will be much swifter. Less time was spent this year on ecological surveys, which is a reflection of the types of projects we carried out in 18/19 compared to 17/18 (when we carried out surveys of Cherwell District and Oxford City sites). More time was spent this year on data collection and management as we have had a very effective group of office volunteers who have been helping us with this.

VOLUNTEERS

TVERC are fortunate to get the help of volunteers to carry out some data processing, species recording and site surveys. We also rely on help from volunteers to manage and input data into our database, and this is where the majority of their time was spent, this year. In 2018-2019, 13 office volunteers spent 172 days helping TVERC with data management and other tasks. If this work had been carried out by paid staff, it would have cost TVERC over £17k.

WORK AREAS

Work Area	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	Days	Percent	Days	Percent	Days	Percent
Supporting recorders and recording groups	113	6%	135	8%	93	5%
Training and education	30	2%	32	2%	30	2%
Data collection & management	188	10%	301	17%	333	18%
Ecological survey and land management advice	267	14%	304	17%	348	18%
Data analysis & presentation	481	25%	192	11%	247	13%
Data provision (GIS datasets and data search reports)	207	11%	213	12%	191	10%
Service management	422	22%	373	21%	401	21%
Service development	236	12%	202	12%	240	13%



FINANCE

TVERC is a ‘not-for-profit’ organisation so any surplus income over expenditure is re-invested into the service, except for that which is held in the Reserve. TVERC is an internal trading unit within OxonCC meaning that our budget must balance to zero each financial year, but we can hold funds in a separate Reserve account.

The Director is responsible for ensuring that sufficient income is obtained each year to cover the costs of running the TVERC service. Financial forecasts are reviewed monthly, with reports to the Steering Group every three months. Charges may be increased or decreased differently than is forecast here, depending on the future situation. TVERC will work to ensure that any fee increases are kept to a minimum for all our customers by ensuring our processes are as efficient as possible.

The biggest expenditure is on staff salaries. However, staff time is also the biggest asset TVERC has, as it’s the staff time spent on projects, data searches and data licences which bring in the income.

We ended 2018-19 with a net surplus of £14.4k, which leaves TVERC in a strong position to continue to invest in improving our service, ensuring we are resilient to change and allowing us to move forwards with plans to become independent of OxonCC.

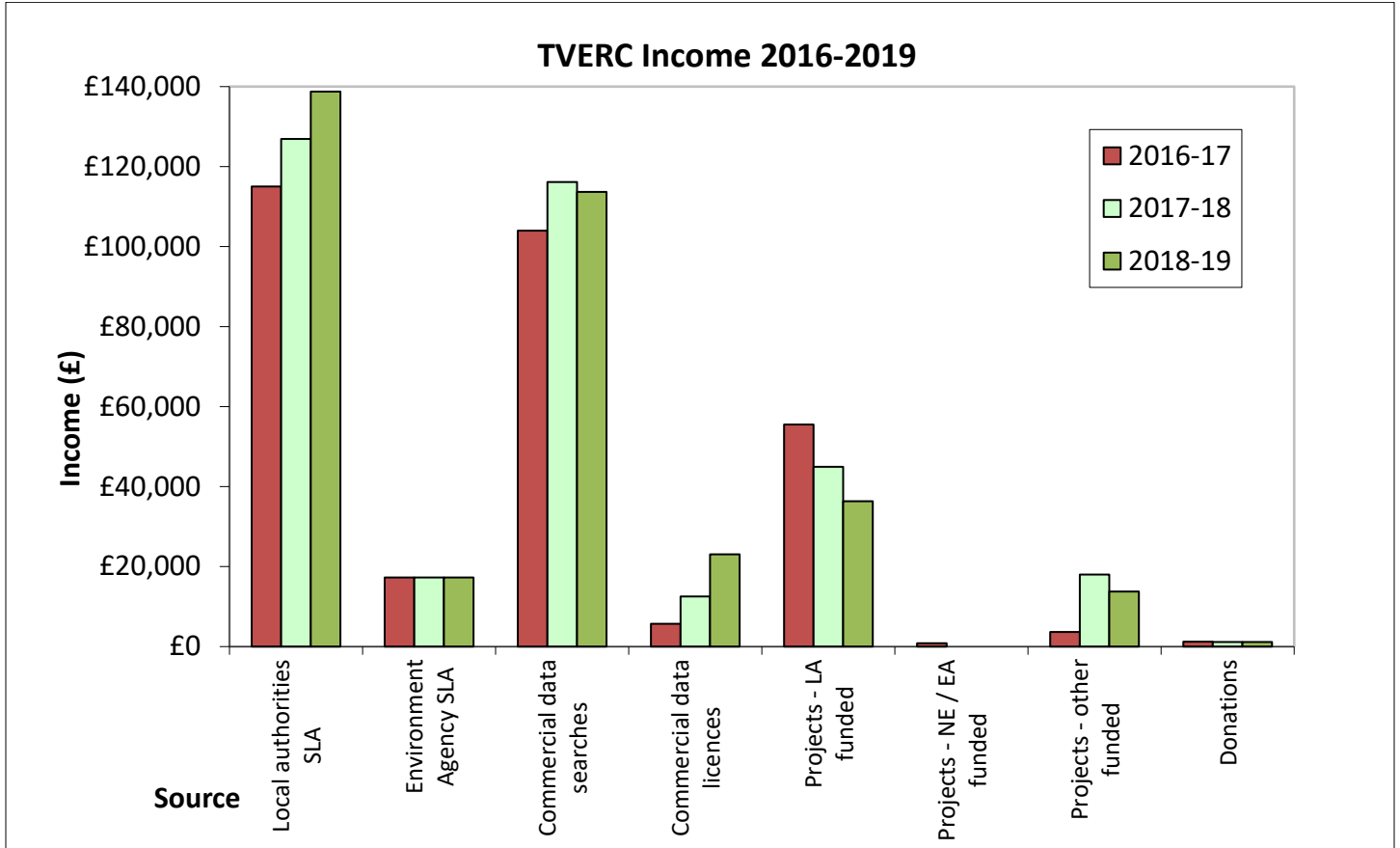


INCOME

TVERC is funded via a number of ways, as shown in the table below. All of these funding streams contribute to the annual cost of collating and managing the TVERC database, resulting in economies of scale for our customers.

In 2018/19 our income from local authority and the Environment Agency service level agreements was about the same as the previous year. Data search income also remained broadly the same, although data licence income increased. Projects income looks like it was significantly decreased in 2018/19, but this was due to an accounting error which occurred at the end of 2017-18 when an invoice was raised for a project twice. The error was identified too late to be reversed that year, so the projects income for 2017-18 was £14.6k higher than it should have been. This has been shown in the table below.

Income	2016-17	2017-18		2018-19
		Originally reported	Corrected	
Local authorities SLA	£115,038	£126,899	£126,899	£138,753
Environment Agency SLA	£17,280	£17,280	£17,280	£17,280
Commercial data searches	£103,977	£116,143	£116,143	£113,684
Commercial data licences	£5,700	£12,545	£12,545	£23,056
Projects - LA funded	£55,523	£59,543	£44,926	£36,343
Projects - NE / EA funded	£825	£0	£0	£0
Projects - other funded	£3,642	£17,998	£17,998	£13,774
Donations	£1,205	£1,160	£1,160	£1,137
TOTAL	£303,190	£349,248	£336,952	£344,025





EXPENDITURE

The majority of TVERC's income is spent on staff (including volunteer expenses). Our staff and volunteers are the biggest asset TVERC has, as it's the staff time spent on projects, data searches and data licenses which bring in the income. Our staff and volunteers also work continuously to improve the TVERC service and data products we can offer our funders.

Our expenditure was fairly consistent in 2018-19 although there was a slight increase in staff costs as we were fully staffed for at least one month of the year! Project expenses were higher than usual in 2017-18 due to paying contractors to carry out some local wildlife site surveys while our Berks Bio Officer was on maternity leave. These expenses returned to the usual level of around £850 this year. In 2017-18 we also spent more than usual on ICT contractors to help with automation of data processes, but in 2018-19 we endeavoured to move this work back in house, so expenditure on 'investment in service' returned to more usual levels of under £15k this year.

Expenditure	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Staff (salaries, expenses, training)	£283,772	£263,562	£278,099
Project expenses	£852	£5,199	£834
Overheads (equipment, printing, postage, subscriptions)	£3,636	£764	£1,809
Premises (paid 'in kind' by OCC)	£16,500	£16,500	£16,500
Recorders Conference	£3,321	£3,383	£3,614
Investment in service (data tools, website etc)	£13,948	£22,936	£12,257
TOTAL	£322,029	£312,344	£313,113



MANAGING FINANCIAL RISK

Due to Oxon CC accounting rules, the Business account must balance to £0 at the end of each financial year, but 'surplus' monies or deficits can be moved into or out of a Balancing account. The TVERC Reserve is also kept in the Balancing account. The TVERC Reserve mitigates TVERC from financial risk. The policy that the Reserve covers the costs of staff redundancies plus three months running costs was agreed by the Steering Group in the September 2012 meeting.

At the end of 2018/19, there was £230,619.04 in the TVERC Balancing Account. The table below outlines what this is allocated for.

Project funding RIA (to be carried forward to 19/20)	
Berks LNP secretariat	£5,225
Natural Capital Investment Plan	£40,325.00
Cherwell DWS surveys	£3,617.00
Habitat Connectivity Data for OxonCC	£995.00
Thames Water data licence 2019/20	£5,250.00
Reserve	
Redundancy costs	£57,125.00
3 months running costs	£90,500.00
Enabling fund	
Move & independence costs	£27,581.79