



Annual Review 2023

© Paul Burke



**Geoff Hetherington,
Chairman**

Once again, a very difficult year, but the volunteers have pulled out all the stops to maintain our level of effort. Without them, the cause would be lost. On a very positive note, Cumbria Wildlife Trust in conjunction with the Cumberland Building Society have employed a red squirrel ranger for three days a week over a twelve-month period. I hope that this will continue into the future, which will help combat the constant accumulation of challenges.

One of our main and ever-present threats is the squirrel pox virus. An example of this was back in December after the period of heavy snow. With all the natural food being covered up to quite a depth, the only food source of

any quantity was from bird feeders and unfortunately, many were not squirrel-proof. This resulted in the reds and greys coming together with the outcome being an outbreak of squirrel pox within 5 – 10 days. This was particularly evident on a holiday complex near Skelwith Bridge where there are many bird feeders that are not squirrel-proof.

The felling of larch trees due to *Phytophthora ramorum* disease and the subsequent disruption in the landscape continues to present us with numerous problems, in particular locating where the squirrels have been displaced. This situation is compounded with the after effects of Storm Arwen.

Unfortunately after many years of dedicated service, some of our volunteers and trustees are standing down or retiring, which leaves us with the need to find

replacements. Anyone who would like to join us would be very welcome. Help is required, especially with administrative tasks. Because of the present cost of living crisis, our funds are somewhat depleted, so anyone with particular skills in fundraising would be more than welcome.

In conclusion, we have a tough year ahead of us. I would like to say a great big thank you to all our members and volunteers. Without you, we could not continue and as I have indicated before, we are on the front line trying to stop the greys from the south in their relentless move northwards into the rest of Cumbria and into Scotland where the majority of reds are holding on. I hope that by our efforts in our area we are also helping the Red Squirrel groups to the north of us reduce their grey numbers.

Facts and figures for 2023



309 Red squirrel sightings



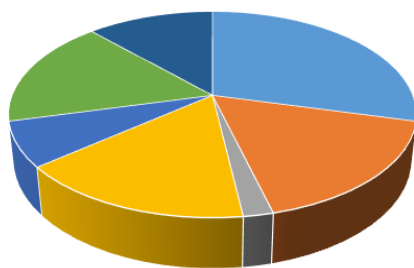
4558 Greys caught or shot

352 Members at the end of 2023



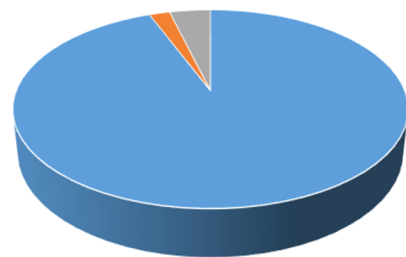
Financials Percentages for the 2023 calendar year

2023 Income



- Membership - 29%
- Donations - 17%
- Collection Boxes - 2%
- Sponsorship - 16%
- Gift Aid - 7%
- Fundraising - 17%
- Grants - 12%

2023 Expenditure



- Red Squirrel Conservation & Grey Control - 94%
- Administration & Insurance - 2%
- Publicity & Merchandise - 4%

Our most recently published accounts for the financial year 2022/23 show income as £27,617 and expenditure as £29,221

Please follow us on social media channels, it's a great way to find out up to date information and share new stories

 **1015** Followers on X

 **131** Followers on Facebook

 **65** Followers on Instagram



We attended:

- 8 Internal meetings
- 4 External meetings
- 1 Field Trip
- 3 Online conferences
- 5 Talks given to local groups
- 2 Media interviews
- 7 Local shows
- 2 Courses

Fundraising made easy

Raising funds for such an important conservation effort is always at the forefront of our minds. Help our fundraising effort at no cost to yourself when you shop online at over 6000 stores.

Join 'Give As You Live' at www.giveasyoulive.com then select Westmorland Red Squirrels as your chosen charity (Charity Reg No. 1144416).

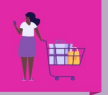
So far we have received £764 while people have been doing their normal online shopping. With your help we can get a lot more through 2024.

3 easy steps:



1

Sign up for FREE and select us as your chosen charity



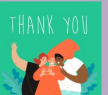
2

When you shop, use Give as you Live Online to visit your chosen retailer



3

Your purchases will generate FREE donations for us!



Thank you...

In addition to the support given by our members, we acknowledge with great thanks the financial and in-kind contributions from the following organisations and individuals:

- Barnes Charitable Trust
- Cedar Manor Hotel
- Cumbria Wildlife Trust
- Dallam Tower Estate
- Forestry England
- Holgates Caravan Parks
- Kendal College
- Lake District Estates
- Lake District National Park
- Lakeland Wildlife Oasis
- Langdale Leisure Ltd
- Levens Hall
- Low Sizergh Barn
- National Trust
- New Barns Caravan Park
- The Birds' Bistro
- Westmorland County Agricultural Society
- Woodland Trust
- Brockhole on Windermere

Please get in touch if you are interested in us giving a talk to your group

secretary@westmorlandredsquirrels.org.uk



© Paul Burke

Rangers' Reflections

We asked our rangers who work and volunteer out in the area to share some of their thoughts on the past year.

"We had another busy year in the Windermere and Bowness area. Last summer was a bumper year for natural food like acorns, beech mast and hazelnuts, good news for red squirrels but unfortunately good news also for grey squirrels, they kept eating and breeding and we were kept busy trying to keep the grey squirrel numbers down."

"Our small colony of red squirrels in St Catherine's wood are still shy but do make an occasional appearance around the area."

"Early this year, we were pleased to hear 3 separate reports of a red squirrel feeding in gardens in the Storrs Hall area for a month or so. The squirrel has now moved on and hopefully found a mate elsewhere." **G.F**

"Here at the National Trust Sizergh Castle we now have eight feeders across seven woodland parcels and I have been joined by two other shooting volunteers in the woods. I think the woodlands around Sizergh have very low populations of grey squirrels now, benefiting the ecology of these woods to a great extent, I hope." **G.G**

"Given that there is a good presence of reds at Canny Hill, it is pleasing to report that we have established a good relationship with two landowners in nearby Finsthwaite and last year, I removed 150 greys from the village. We have just taken on Chapel House Wood, a site just across the A590 from Canny Hill." **H.B**

Our thanks to **Cumbria Wildlife Trust** for printing this Annual Review and to **Paul Burke** for the use of his images.

Website: www.westmorlandredsquirrels.org.uk

Charity Number: 1144416

Secretary: Gail Armstrong

Tel: 01524 701316

Email: secretary@westmorlandredsquirrels.org.uk

Chairman: Geoff Hetherington

Mob: 07836 584201

Email: chairman@westmorlandredsquirrels.org.uk

Last call for help....

If you want to get a bit more involved in the running of Westmorland Red Squirrels or want more information on anything mentioned in this year's Annual Review please get in touch via our secretary, thank you.



© Paul Burke

Every Squirrel sighting is important to us, PLEASE
Report your squirrel sightings : www.westmorlandredsquirrels.org.uk/sightings