THE tubney CHARITABLE TRUST

Giving our all:

reflections of a spend out charity

“The great use of life is to spend it
for something that outlasts it.”

William James (1842–1910)

Miles and Briony Blackwell, founders of The Tubney Charitable Trust

CLARENCE HOUSE

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate The Tubney Charitable Trust on its fifteen successful years as a grant-giving organization.

During this time I have greatly admired the ways in which The Tubney Charitable Trust has cared for those whose voices so often go unheard amidst the deafening cries of need. Tubney's determination to support initiatives which protect uncharismatic – but irreplaceable – creatures proves the very point that we live in precious balance with Nature around us.

As Tubney's finite life comes to an end, I am so grateful for all that it has done – not just for causes close to my own heart – but also for the independence it has given to other, smaller organizations. This foresight ensures that the legacy of the Tubney Charitable Trust will live on far longer than the Trust itself.

Tubney's story is a truly fascinating one. This book tells the tale of a charitable trust created out of the generosity of its founders which grew to become a proactive champion for the natural environment and the welfare of farmed animals – a champion that has made the most dramatic difference. It highlights great achievements through successful grant-making and collaborative working – as a result the world has been a better place because of the Tubney Trust and many of us will be forever in its debt.

Charles

The Prince of Wales © Chris Jackson

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Hay Meadow © Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust

Welcome

During its 15-year existence, the composition of the small group of Trustees and staff running The Tubney Charitable Trust changed very little. But Tubney's vision, aims and working methods went through several radical transformations. We hope that what we have learned on our journey may be of interest to others involved in charitable giving, especially grant-makers, precisely because we have travelled so far so quickly, if not always in a straight line. Indeed, it is perhaps our mistakes and detours that will be most instructive.

Trustees and staff: (Back row from left to right) Claire Tyrrell, Nick Forster, Sarah Ridley, James Webb, Anil Patil, Angie Seal (Front row from left to right) Jonathan Burchfield, Jim Kennedy, René Olivieri, Terry Collins

The Tubney Charitable Trust: grant-making 1997 – 2012

“The most difficult and important question all Trustees must ask themselves is ‘why do we exist?’ A corollary is ‘why do we need to exist forever?’ Can we do more good by concentrating our resources, within a fixed timeframe and very specific areas of interest? Can we do even more good by using our resources to make other organisations pursuing similar or identical goals more effective and robust? Knowing you are not going to be around forever forces grant-makers not to micro-manage their grant recipients, but rather to try to understand how those organisations work and think.”

René Olivieri, Chair of Tubney Trustee Board

The Tubney Charitable Trust: summary of grant-making

Initial grant-making (1997 – 2001)

From its creation in 1997 until the untimely deaths of its founders in 2001, the Trust made small-scale grants to causes of personal interest to the founders.

During this period, we made

77 awards

totalling **£90,000**

with an average grant size of just over **£1,000**

Generalist, reactive grant-making (2001 – 2004)

From 2001 until we implemented a strategic plan in 2004, the Trust could be described as a generalist, reactive grant-maker.

During this period, we made

224 awards

totalling **£12,856,936**

with an average grant size of just over **£57,000**

Defined, project-based grant-making (2004 – 2008)

Following our strategic review, we chose to target our funding on two reactive programmes supporting high-quality projects with defined milestones and outcomes that would deliver a long-term impact on:

- The protection and enhancement of the natural environment of the UK through the achievement of UK Biodiversity Action Plan targets;
- The improvement of the welfare of farmed animals (all animals bred and reared for the production of food or other products), in the UK and internationally.

In addition, as part of the Trust's Special Initiative funding and following the cessation of support for palliative care and education, we made a final grant to each of these sectors, both for £1 million.

During this period, we made

99 awards

totalling **£21,310,723**

with an average grant size of just over **£215,000**

Legacy grant-making (2008 – 2012)

In the final phase of the Trust's grant-making life, the Trustees made the decision to cease project-based grant-making and to develop significant 'legacy' partnerships with key non-governmental organisations in the environment and farmed animal welfare sectors. The Trust focused on capacity building, providing a limited number of large 'legacy grants' designed to transform the capability of key operational charities to enable them to deliver their charitable objectives – which they share with the Trust – well beyond the life of the Trust. We also established an additional objective to encourage effective philanthropy and awarded a number of small grants for initiatives to achieve this aim.

During this period, we distributed

the majority in significant legacy partnership grants which we hope will build the capacity of charities seeking to deliver significant improvement for biodiversity and the welfare of farmed animals

8 grants ranging from £1.3 million to £3.43 million

Grant-making 1997 – 2012

Area of support	No of awards	£
Initial grant-making (1997 – 2001)		
General	77	90,000
Total	**77**	**90,000**
Generalist, reactive grant-making (2001 – 2004)		
Education	78	3,734,595
Palliative Care	73	2,653,122
Natural Environment	27	2,171,752
Animal Welfare	11	764,358
Other	35	3,533,109
Total	**224**	**12,856,936**
Defined, project-based grant-making (2004 – 2008)		
Conservation of the Natural Environment	72	13,563,962
Farmed Animal Welfare	11	4,458,137
Special Initiative	16	3,288,624
Total	**99**	**21,310,723**
Legacy grant-making (2008 – 2012)		
Conservation of the Natural Environment	27	13,070,322
Farmed Animal Welfare	22	15,397,875
Philanthropy	4	148,119
Total	**53**	**28,616,316**

The Trust will close by 31 March 2012 having made grants totalling nearly £65 million in a 15-year period.

The birth and early years (1997 – 2001)

We will say little about our provenance. This is not because we do not cherish the memory of Miles and Briony Blackwell, our founders, who died tragically in quick succession in 2001. Nor is it that we are unappreciative of their incredible generosity. Rather, one of their few stipulations was that we keep personal references to them to a minimum. Such was their desire for anonymity that our benefactors gave the charity they had founded the name of the village in which they had lived for many years, in order to deflect attention away from themselves.

The Tubney Charitable Trust was established in 1997 upon Miles Blackwell's retirement from the family publishing business in Oxford with an initial fund of some £500,000. His wife Briony was one of the original Trustees along with Jonathan Burchfield and the charity distributed only the income of its (expendable) endowment each year, up to £30,000 annually. The Trustees worked in an enthusiastically amateur way, with an initial sifting process for grant applications involving the 'wet thumb' test – checking if the signature on an applicant's letter was original by seeing if the ink would run. If not, the application went no further, and many perished in this way! As a result the total money awarded was fairly small in relation to effort expended by disappointed and perhaps baffled grant applicants. However, those years helped to give an insight into the charitable instincts and thinking of our donors.

At their deaths, our donors left the bulk of their estates, including their family homes, to the Trust they had recently established. This amounted to a portfolio of £50 million. (Over the life of the Trust the charity's investments allowed us to award grants of nearly £65 million.) The donors had identified three other potential Trustees to join the Board, each of whom was a personal advisor or professional colleague. At this point, the Trust employed no staff and the projects funded reflected the wide-ranging interests of the donors, including music and history, historic building restoration and the history of naval warfare.

Our benefactors would have been the first to admit that their giving did not reflect a clear-cut agenda. Moreover, they provided in their Wills precious little guidance as to how they wanted their fortune spent. This was due in part to their untimely deaths. But it is also a testament to their humility. They were committed delegators and, having hand-picked their Trustees, they had faith in them to ‘do the right things’.

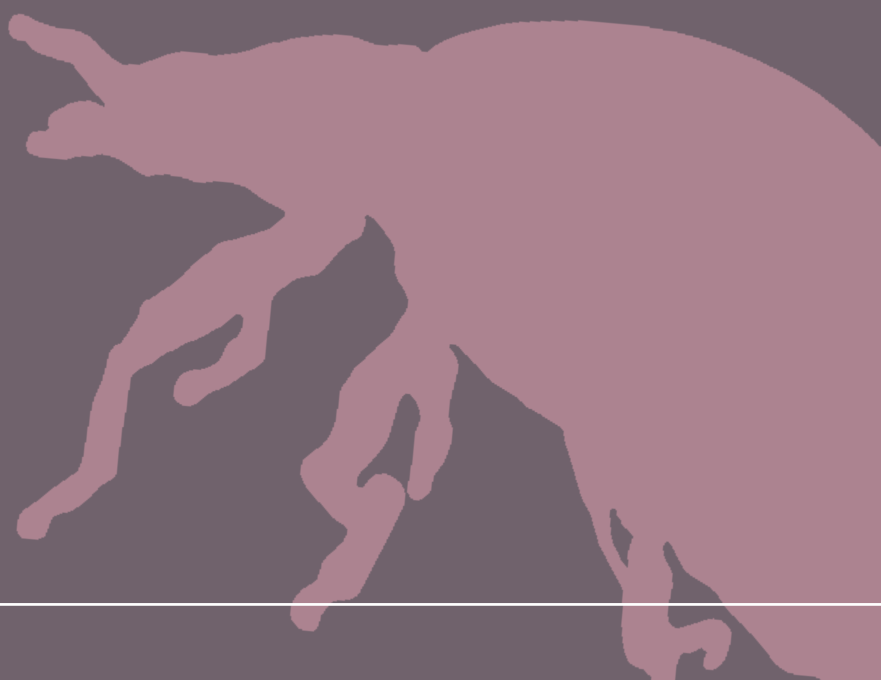
This was a heady experience for the Trustees and we perceived it as perhaps less daunting than we should have done. We had a broad licence to interpret the wishes of the donors; indeed, we felt they would have wanted us to imbue it with our personal values. We were a self-confident lot and had often led others through the ‘vision-strategy-objectives’ process in our professional lives. We thought we could agree our destination amongst the four of us and steer our own course towards it.

We sat down to devise a grant-making strategy with a keen sense of responsibility and a virtually clean sheet of paper. We say ‘virtually’ because Miles and Briony passed on to us a distaste of large charities and an aversion to bureaucracy and wasteful spending. And they were adamant about one thing, aside from their desire to remain effectively anonymous. Consistent with their view that a charity should not be a bid for personal immortality, they stipulated that the Trust should have a finite life. We took ‘finite’ to mean ‘years’ rather than ‘decades’. This stipulation had a profound effect on the way the charity was conceived from the outset.

Our first steps (2001 – 2003)

Following the death of our donors towards the end of 2001, the Trustees set themselves a private deadline of 10 years for concluding our grant-making. We weren’t given a categorical timeframe by the donors and it remained throughout an arbitrary reference point. Why not five years, or 15, or 25? As one of the Trustees said at the time: *“Ten years just felt right”*.

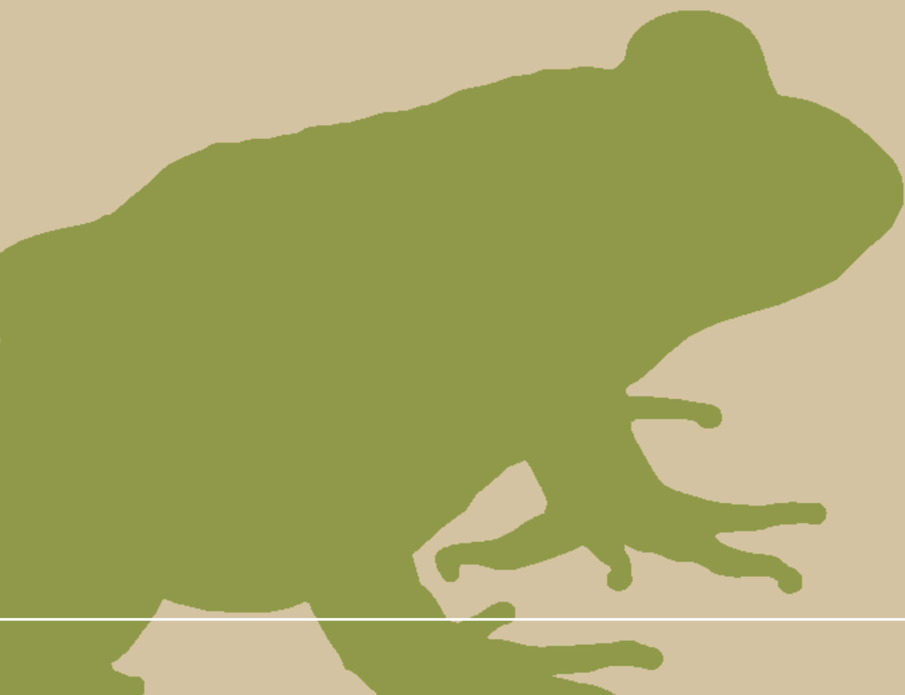
Quickly, perhaps too quickly as it turned out, the Trustees settled on four core funding areas: education, palliative care, the environment and



animal welfare. We felt proud that we had arrived at a consensus so speedily. We were also confident that our donors would have approved of our choices.

With backgrounds in law, accountancy and publishing, we thought we had been admirably clear and concise in our guidance to potential applicants.

But with the benefit of hindsight we realised we were being hopelessly naïve: our criteria for eligibility were far too broad and general. The floodgates opened and we responded, saying yes as often as we could but still turning away scores of worthy proposals. We knew something wasn't right when we couldn't always explain, even to ourselves, why we had accepted one proposal but turned down another similar in nature. We asked ourselves 'why not?' instead of 'why?' and felt increasingly guilty about the amount of work that had gone into preparing those unsuccessful bids.



We put in place minimum and maximum grant limits but these seemed like fairly arbitrary filters. We eschewed large charities on no other grounds than their size.

We thought of ourselves as 'pump primers', even where it was not always obvious which pumps we were priming to do precisely what. We discouraged applicants from asking for a contribution to core costs; we wanted every penny to go toward achieving specific, additional, measurable gains.

Yet instead of feeling elated at the end of a trustee board meeting, happy about the 'good' we had done, the Trustees were not content. *"I feel like we are just putting a finger in the dyke,"* bemoaned one Trustee. *"We are making a contribution but are we making a real difference?"*

Gradually, it began to dawn on us that although we had lots of business and life experience, we knew precious little about grant-making practices. We had been too eager to start making grants and overconfident in our ability to learn on the job. We failed to recognise that our guidelines to applicants were too general and that we were wasting valuable time – theirs and ours – on applications we were ultimately unlikely to accept. A lot of our attention was focused on two things. First, we waited to see commitment, usually in the form of additional financial support, either from internal resources or additional

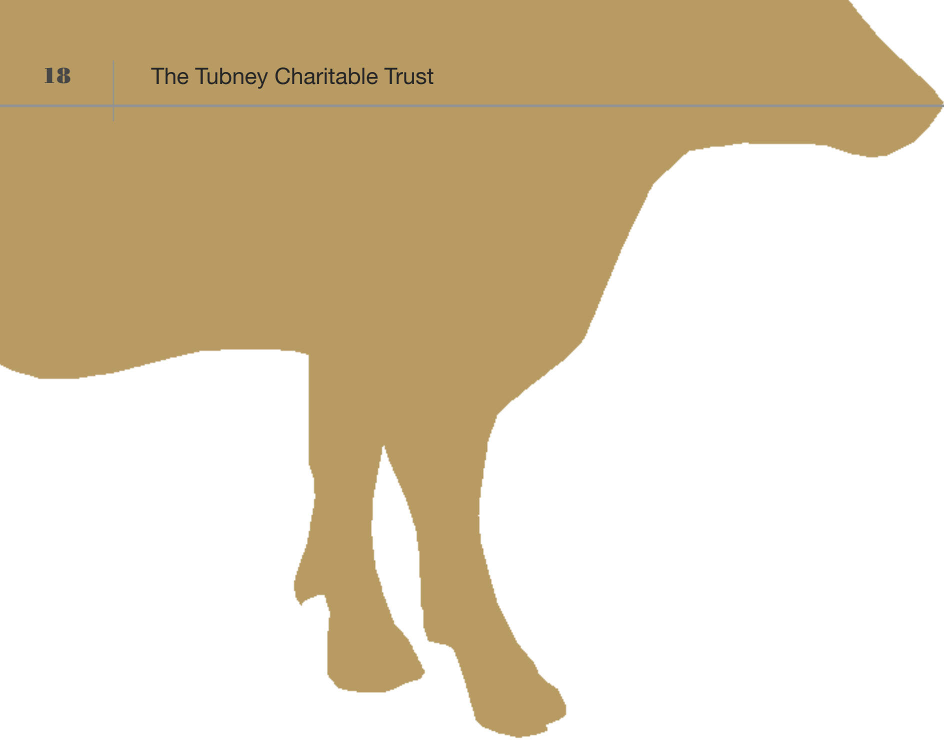
sponsors. Second, we required quantifiable, measurable outcomes and a credible project and management plan designed to deliver tangible outcomes.

Though vaguely aware that something wasn't quite right, we were unwilling at first to accept that part of the solution to our frustration might entail restricting the scope of our grant-making or hiring in expert staff to advise us. Our reluctance was in part about the extra cost, but it perhaps also reflected a worry that an expert might have their own agenda that could influence our judgement. Again, we were mistaken. The sense of crisis was heightened by our gnawing anxiety that our time, money and patience might run out before we had 'made a difference'.

An early trauma

The new Trustee Board had scarcely met, let alone published any statement of our aims and scope, before we had our first lesson in media management. Perhaps noting that the Blackwells maintained a small flock of Manx Loaghtan sheep, an overly imaginative reporter from a major Sunday newspaper informed the world that Miles and Briony had left their entire fortune to the Rare Breeds Survival Trust. This was most certainly not the case and the Trustees quickly refuted the claim. An apology was published by the newspaper, but, unfortunately, the story had poured cold water on that admirable charity's embryonic fundraising drive.

However, our founders did have a special interest in rare breed sheep and later we made a major grant to the Rare Breeds Survival Trust to fund the creation of a comprehensive genetic bank of rare breed sheep as a means of preserving biodiversity. But we recognise our award was also motivated by compassion for the charity which, through no fault of its own (or ours!), had been the victim of poor journalism.



Adolescence (2003 – 2004)

Strategic review

Having identified some of our own limitations, we outsourced our administration and management, tapping into the resources and expertise of a specialist legal firm. This helped us in the short-term, buying us time to plan for the future of the charity while our founders' estates were being administered (by another law firm) and our endowment was being gathered in. But over time we worried that we were not building up in-house subject expertise or robust relationships with other charities. As our unease with our strategy grew, so did our dissatisfaction with this initial structure. Eventually, we decided to recruit an Executive Director from the charity sector and once we had made the appointment we gave her the task of determining our future staffing requirements and organisational structure.

Our new Executive Director exhorted us to think about our strategy and policies before we turned to questions of internal structure and staffing. She had to handle this enterprise with great delicacy. Obviously, she had a lot more experience in grant-making than the Trustees, but she had just returned from another country and had only begun to establish a relationship with her Board. And she held firmly to the idea of trustee autonomy: at the end of the day it was up to the Board to make the key decisions. Even though she might have diagnosed some of the Trust's problems herself, she could see that, for both her and the Trustees, an impartial outsider might be able to challenge the Board more effectively, without damaging important budding relationships. She brought in an experienced external facilitator who was not afraid to ask us awkward questions or to challenge our fixed positions.

Through a series of intensive meetings over a number of months, the facilitator helped us to look at ourselves and what we had achieved thus far in a critical light. We felt proud of the individual grants we had made, but looked at together they did not tell a coherent story; the whole was frankly less than the sum of the parts. He pointed out inconsistencies and sloppiness in our thinking and in our procedures. We felt a bit brutalised at times but we could see the benefit of having someone from outside who would not be 'nice' to us. We knew we had too much 'baggage', i.e. too many disparate causes and values we wanted to support.

Defining direction

The facilitator put up a number of alternative strategies for the Trust. We rejected most of these but doing so forced us to define our own ideas and goals much more clearly. It is said that strategy is principally about deciding what 'not' to do, and we found the process of letting go of projects and areas of need we cared deeply about often painful and discouraging. Each of the Trustees had to sacrifice some of their 'sacred cows'. It was hard for all of us to let go of palliative care: most of us had seen first-hand the wonderful and highly skilled work of carers. Education, the other victim of our pruning exercise, had been highly valued by the donors; indeed, it had formed the basis for the family enterprise that had generated much of their wealth. But something had to give; we now knew that. We did need outside help to confront these choices but the Board came through the process with a renewed sense of purpose.

Our vision was clear. We wanted to support sustainable, high-quality projects that delivered a long-term impact on:

- Conservation of the natural environment of the UK;
- Improvement of the welfare of farmed animals in the UK and internationally.

We then recruited three additional members of staff – an Environment Programme Director, an Administration and Finance Manager, and a Grants Manager – to enable us to deliver our new strategy. As we had done with the recruitment of our Executive Director, we told all candidates explicitly that, given our limited lifespan, we didn't know how long these jobs would last, but this did not impede us in recruiting excellent staff.

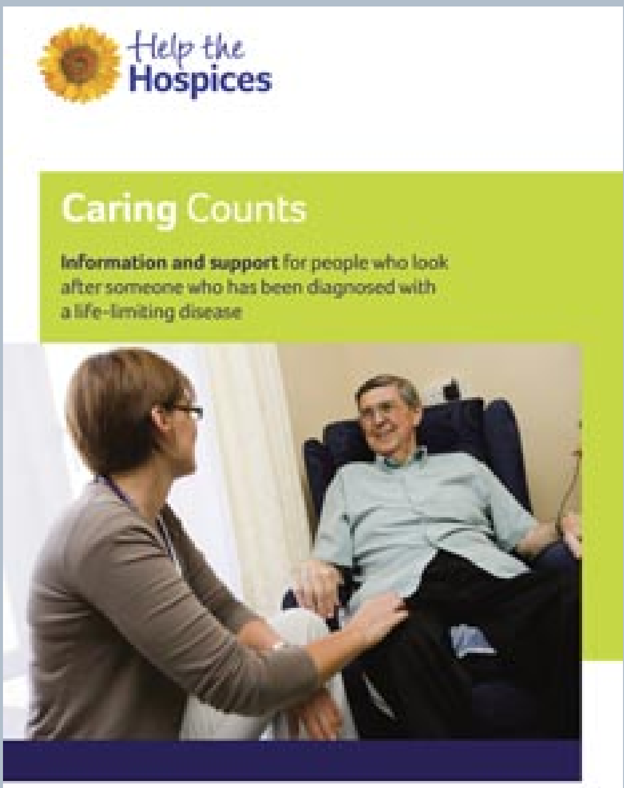
When we decided to close the education and palliative care programmes we spent considerable time deciding on how to make a final, significant gift in each of these sectors that would have a lasting impact. We were able to make a £1 million grant to Help the Hospices to support carers of the terminally ill, and £1 million to Comic Relief to support educational projects in Africa.

Help the Hospices

Towards the Care for the Carers of the Terminally Ill Project

Date: October 2004

Following the closure of our palliative care programme and with New Philanthropy Capital helping us to identify that support for carers was a funding gap in the palliative care field, the Trust made a final gift to the sector through a major new initiative with Help the Hospices. This matched £1 for £1 the money raised for the charity by runners in the Flora London Marathon 2005, up to a maximum of £1 million. The programme aimed to support people who provide unpaid care for a terminally ill relative or friend, through funding local support services, developing information resources and undertaking strategic policy work.



Help the Hospices (HtH), Caring for Carers © HtH

For example, a number of resources were disseminated nationally, including the Caring for Carers Pack, which provides information on money and legal matters, nursing, caring at home, and death and dying. Carers UK and the Bereavement Advisory Service help to update the pack on an annual basis.

In addition, the programme funded 15 innovative projects making a tangible difference to people who provide care for terminally ill family members or friends. These were evaluated by Lancaster University to extract lessons learned and identify best practices. The findings were disseminated via academic journals, poster presentations and a briefing paper for hospices in June 2009.

www.helpthehospices.org.uk/carers

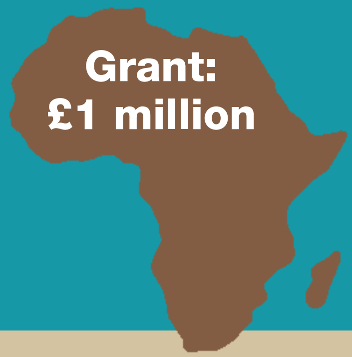
"This was a remarkable and innovative move by The Tubney Charitable Trust. By doubling the money we raised through the Flora London Marathon, we had a real and lasting impact on the estimated 570,000 people who are caring for a loved one with a terminal illness. Building on our work, Help the Hospices was able to develop a UK-wide programme of activity that supported this group of carers, who have great emotional, financial and practical needs that are poorly met."

David Praill, Chief Executive, Help the Hospices

Comic Relief

A strategic grant for education in Africa

Date: November 2005



In closing our education programme, we decided to make a significant grant to support education in Africa since our founder had a personal interest in the continent having spent many years doing business there. However, we realised that neither the Trustees nor the staff were knowledgeable in this field. After extensive research and discussion about how we might most effectively support this cause, we decided to work with grant-makers who are experts in this field and to make a £1 million grant to Comic Relief.

Tubney's award was complemented by £3 million raised through Comic Relief's Red Nose Day Appeals and was used in an innovative, strategic programme designed to share information and expertise on transforming education for girls in Tanzania and Nigeria. The programme continues today and seeks to address the underlying inequality that prevents girls from attending school. It has invested in teachers so they in turn can encourage girls, who frequently drop out of school, to complete their basic education.

As an innovative programme, involving five charities on two continents and in three countries, it has not been without problems. However, from our perspective, the grant has been a great success as it has allowed the Trust to support an area of great interest to the Trustees but in which the Trust lacked experience. Comic Relief has been an invaluable intermediary for us.

www.comicrelief.com

Comic Relief, Education in Africa © Comic Relief

Coming of age (2004 – 2008)

Championing our causes

Why had we chosen to focus on farmed animal welfare and biodiversity? Yes, these were issues of particular concern to our founders, Miles and Briony. But perhaps chief among our reasons was a sense that these were 'big' problems, largely overlooked. Few other grant-makers had taken them to heart, and we had inherent advantages. We were a relative newcomer with no brand name to worry about and no fundraising aspirations so we weren't competing with anyone else for money or recognition. Our size, funding security and flexibility gave us the opportunity to 'boldly go' where other established funders with a particular public persona or patronage could not. We could ask the awkward, open-ended questions.

We cut our cloth to suit our resources, picking issues that had been relatively neglected by other funders and where our funding could make a significant difference. As it happened, the relatively small number of active NGOs working in our chosen sectors meant we could fairly quickly add value not just through our chequebook, but increasingly through our knowledge and networks as well.

Farmed animals

We see factory farming as one of the great, largely hidden, evils of our modern world. In recent times most of humankind has come to accept that, regardless of race, sex, or nationality, all human beings have rights. At the same time, scientific research has helped us to understand just how like us other animals are, not least in their capacity for suffering.

The combination of rising global population and rising income levels means the world's demand for animal products, particularly meat, will soar in the next few decades. On current trends the number of animals killed annually for human consumption is expected to potentially double to 120 billion within the next 30 to 40 years, and unless these trends are reversed an even larger proportion of these will be mutilated and force-fed in crowded indoor sheds. Apart from the consequences for the animals themselves, this phenomenon has disturbing and far-reaching implications for everything from human health and climate change to the depletion of scarce resources such as energy, water and land. Only a handful of small charities and almost no funding bodies have taken the welfare of farmed animals to heart.

University of Bristol

The Healthy Feet Project – reducing lameness in dairy cattle

Date: April 2006

Scientific studies show that, on any one day, 22% of the UK dairy herd is lame. This serious welfare issue is unknown to most milk drinkers who are unaware of the suffering of the animals and that lameness can lead to significant reduction in milk yields and to the need to cull animals. Indeed, the economic consequences of lameness have been largely unrecognised by farmers themselves.

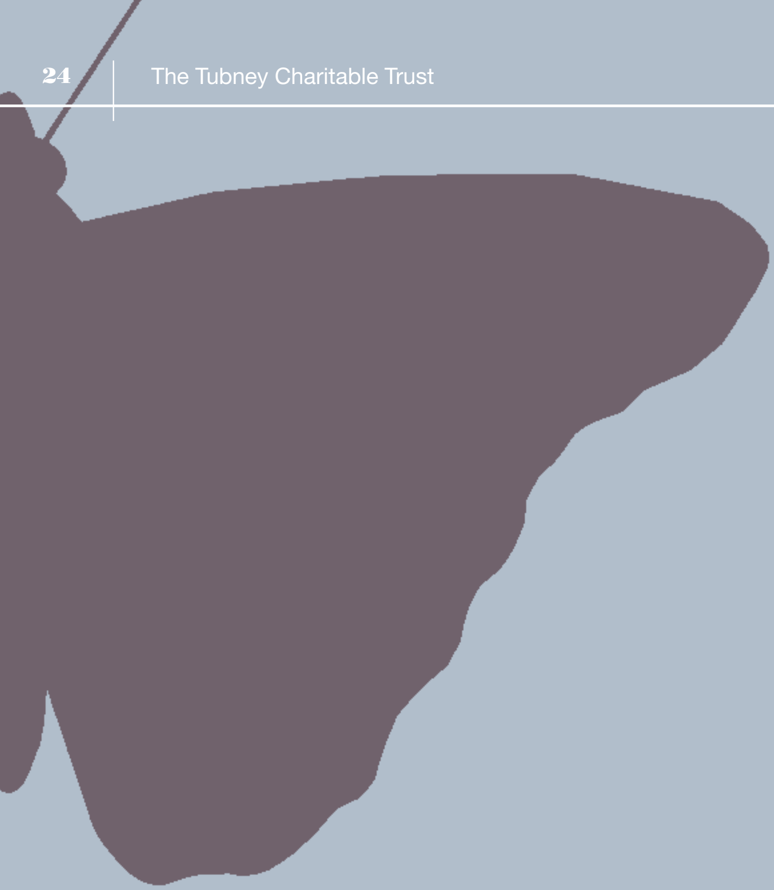
Our grant supported the University of Bristol's project aiming to deliver a significant reduction in lameness in dairy cattle in the UK herd by ensuring that farmers and milk producers apply scientific knowledge in current commercial systems to prevent and control lameness in dairy cattle. A theme running throughout our farmed animal welfare programme has been supporting projects for which the basic research had been undertaken and practical solutions had been identified, but where implementation or farmer engagement was lacking. Of the 210 dairy farms involved in the large, commercial-scale study directly supported by the Tubney grant, 185 farms are continuing to implement the simple yet effective husbandry changes on-farm to reduce lameness.

What is more, as a result of its participation in the project, DairyCo – a levy-funded, not-for-profit organisation working on behalf of Britain's dairy farmers – is rolling out a National Healthy Feet Programme to 11,743 dairy farms in England and Wales. This education programme draws extensively on the methodology and findings of the Tubney-funded Healthy Feet Project and has included the circulation of 2,700 DVDs to assist farmers in England and Wales in identifying lameness in their herds.

In addition, the project helped to leverage further funding to support roll-out across the nation. For example, farmers in the South West have identified lameness as their top priority. As a result, the University of Bristol collaborated closely with Duchy College to secure £5.2 million from the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) for the dairy cattle and sheep sectors, a major strand of which is lameness training modelled on the Healthy Feet Project.

www.vetschool.bris.ac.uk/animalwelfare

University of Bristol (UoB), Healthy Feet Project, mobility scoring in dairy cattle © UoB



Biodiversity

Every day we read about the extinction of species and the destruction of unique habitats. The loss of species, locally as well as globally, can have significant and difficult-to-predict effects up and down the food chain. The inexorable growth in the human population, and the consequent demands to bring remaining natural habitats into use to produce food and fuel for human consumption, can only increase the pressures on our remaining biodiversity. Yet, even with the climate change catastrophe looming, only 3% of charitable grants go to environmental concerns[1] and, of this, only part goes to biodiversity conservation.

Most news reports highlight the loss of individual bird and mammal species, usually creatures with beautiful fur or plumage as these have the greatest resonance with the general public. Unconstrained by donor wishes or the need to raise funds through public appeals, we have been able to focus our efforts on the less immediately attractive, but ecologically often more important, animal groups and environments. We were proud to support projects directed at uncharismatic bugs, amphibians, and weeds, and as a result to have helped to protect some of the UK's least-regarded species and to conserve and expand some of our most important habitats.

In the UK, a national Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP), first published in 1984, set out actions required for the restoration of biodiversity, with action plans for the most threatened species and habitats. The Trust, having decided to limit itself to biodiversity in the UK, took the targets for practical action within the UKBAP as the key measurable outputs for projects we would support. No plan of this type could ever be perfect, but the sign-up of all the key delivery agencies, statutory and non-governmental, gave the targets a great deal of credibility. Within these targets, we eschewed those concerned with a single species and instead generally favoured those that could have a significant and enduring impact on whole habitats.

[1] *Where the Green Grants Went*
www.greenfunders.org/wp-content/uploads/Green-Grants-4-FinalSP.pdf

Having funded many land purchases in our early days, we began to see this as only one weapon in our armoury. With climate change unavoidable, we wanted to support the creation of larger and more effective reserves and, equally if not more importantly, corridors for moving between them. Work to buffer these sites from the threats of neighbouring land-use, the creation of stepping stones and corridors for species dispersal and the 'softening' of the most damaging land-use practices are all among the elements of this 'landscape' approach.

We supported three main types of project through the open programme, within these constraints:

- Land acquisition, where this extended, linked or buffered existing high-quality UKBAP priority habitats;
- Landowner liaison projects seeking to restore, create and link priority habitats; and
- Species projects, where these were of significant scale and, usually, where they benefited more than one species.

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

Towards the purchase and restoration of land in the Flow Country

Date: 2006 – 2009

Grants totalling £1,075,000

In 2006, Tubney supported the purchase of just under 150 hectares of forestry plantation identified within the RSPB's priorities for acquisition and restoration in the Flow Country in northern Scotland. This area of peat bog is the largest in the world and represents the UK's largest remaining wilderness. Sadly, in the 1970s, forestry tree planting in the Flows was encouraged and the resulting conifer plantations are drying out areas of bog and having damaging impacts on bird populations on the remaining open areas. The RSPB indicated to Tubney that buying and clearing planted sites and removing drainage measures was its highest priority for our potential support. The remoteness of the Flows from centres of population meant that many funders were not able or willing to fund this work.

At the closure of the open programme for Conservation of the Natural Environment, the Trustees decided to award a further grant for the purchase of over 1,000 hectares in two blocks and to provide additional support as a restricted grant to enable the RSPB to plan with confidence for further purchases in this unique landscape. The RSPB is negotiating the acquisition of a further 1,500 hectares using this grant, alongside donations from its members, with plans in place to further extend its landholdings in the Flows. To date the RSPB owns 16,888 hectares and manages 20,030 hectares of this rare habitat.

www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/f/forsinard/index.aspx

Restoration of Forsinard © RSPB

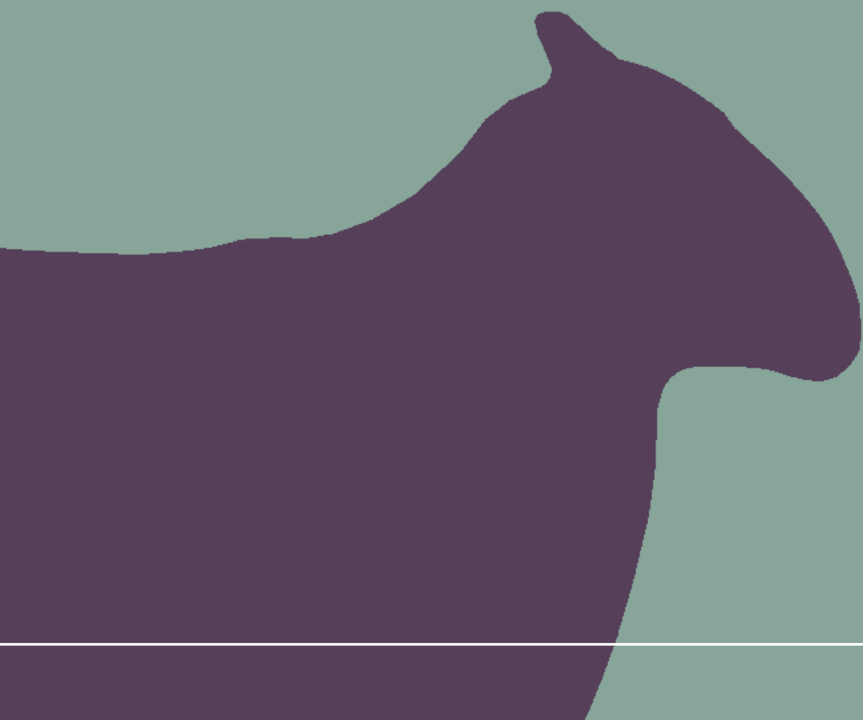
RSPB Forsinard Flows reserve © Andy Hay (www.rspb-images.com)

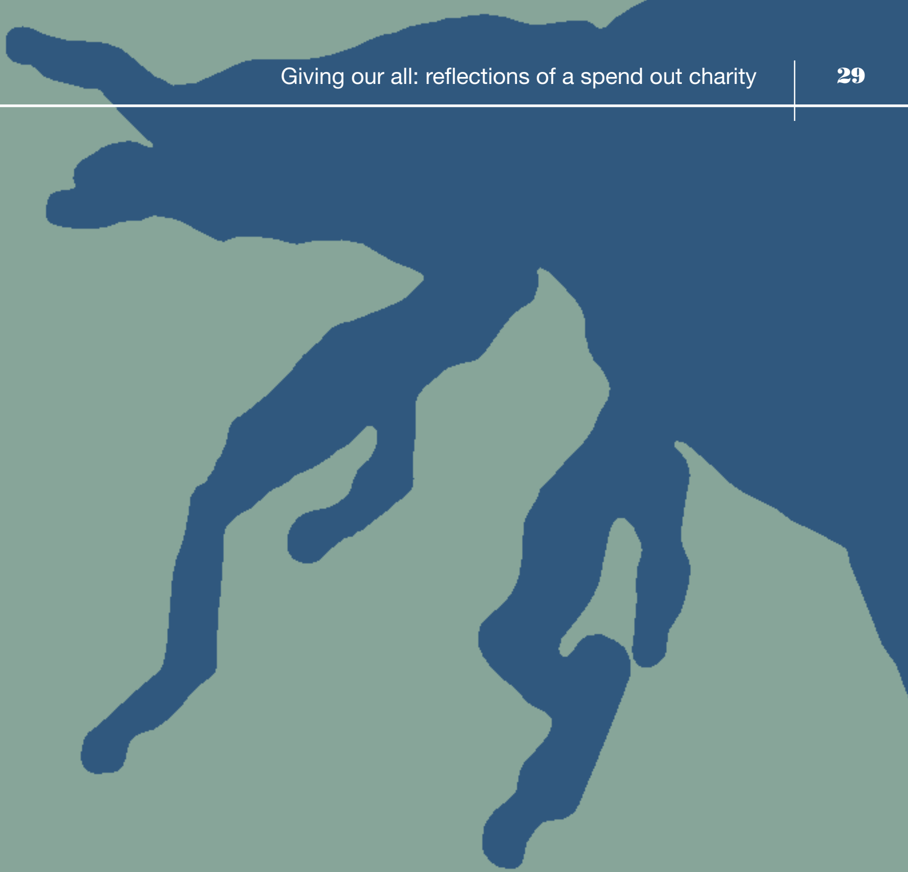
Being proactive

Following our strategic review in 2003 we began to think proactively rather than reactively. We were no longer content to just wait to see what grant proposals came in unsolicited. With a clearer sense of where we were going, it also became obvious what kind of subject expertise we lacked and how professional staff could fill this gap. Our three additional staff members were in post by 2004 and among their key functions they took on responsibility for educating Trustees in our programme areas and explaining our new goals and requirements to potential grant recipients. The staff developed a new set of grant-making procedures and policies to match our new strategy, including more precise and transparent guidelines. For the Trustees, this new iteration of our strategy gave us a clearer and more consistent set of criteria for judging applications. Our environmental programme director helped us to refine our focus to delivering practical benefits for UK biodiversity so that guidelines for grant applicants made it clear we would want to know how their projects would help the UK achieve Biodiversity Action Plan targets.

On the animal welfare side we spent some time grappling with the question of the geographic scale at which we sought to operate. Given the fact that so much of the food we consume in the UK is imported, we refined our guidelines to support the improvement of the welfare of farmed animals, both in the UK and internationally.

We had already invested in our own infrastructure by acquiring a robust Grants Management software programme, but in anticipation for launching our revised guidelines we acquired an additional programme that allowed grantees to submit their applications to us online and enabled us to manage all communications electronically. The software programme was an invaluable tool, but even more important to our successful use of its potential was the strategic thinking brought to the coordination task by our Grants Manager. Her ability to see both the big picture of our grant-making objectives and the detail required to review, pay and monitor our grants was essential to our effective and personal relationship with each grantee.





In 2007, we again expanded the professional staff, employing a programme officer to concentrate on Farmed Animal Welfare, and a team administrator to help maximise our efficiency.

With a narrower brief, Trustees and staff could now dig deeper and acquire a more profound understanding of the issues and opportunities. We set about making ourselves more 'expert'. At trustee meetings we now had staff to provide us with briefings on current issues in our sectors and on many occasions we had external experts present, not to comment on specific proposals, but to educate staff and Trustees generally.

With time and training we began to 'join up the dots', not just spotting similarities and connections between projects but often bringing different projects and organisations together. We began to feel that we were a relatively important part of the network within our sectors, facilitating the cross-fertilisation of ideas, spreading best practice and raising standards. As our knowledge and commitment grew, so it seemed that grant recipients began to turn to us for advice as often as for funding. We felt that we had become partners in the best sense of the word.

Whereas before the main strands of our giving seemed to have little to do with one another, we soon saw profound common themes and interdependencies between our two chosen programmes – farmed animal welfare and biodiversity. What's more, we began to see how these areas were directly related to broader social issues and trends such as energy and water use, climate change, and human health and nutrition. The production of food is the common thread running through both our concerns and these broader social and environmental issues.

Recently, the publication of the *Food Issues Census*, which Tubney helped fund, has estimated that less than 1% of all charitable giving in the UK is spent on food-related issues[2].

[2] The 2011 *Food Issues Census* provides an overview of the work of civil society groups in the UK, based on a survey of over 300 organisations. **www.foodissuescensus.org**

Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust

Towards the Stepping Stones for Wildlife project: developing a network of invertebrate reserves in Essex

Date: September 2008

Grant up to £187,864

Buglife's long-term project in south Essex is seeking to create a landscape that will meet the needs of a range of threatened invertebrate species. A series of stepping stone sites with appropriate habitat have been created that will allow the dispersal and increase in populations of rare bees, wasps, beetles, flies, butterflies and moths.

The management work carried out is often small-scale but vital, for example, creating disturbed ground for burrowing bees and wasps, ensuring that specific food plants are available, and clearing scrub. The 'landscape' concept is determined by the species target, not human perceptions of scale or landscape quality. How far can these species travel and what type and size of habitat will meet their needs when they arrive?

The project has carried out detailed surveys, which have revealed that brownfield sites in the area are even more important than first thought for threatened invertebrates. These surveys have informed the design of the 'stepping stones'. Work to create local awareness and understanding of the rich biodiversity of sites, which often appear unattractive and uninteresting and are too often overlooked in the planning system, has also been delivered. The work of this project should enhance the identification and protection of other important sites.

Buglife's interest in the conservation of all invertebrate species, most of which fall firmly into the uncharismatic category, was of great interest to the Trust. The organisation's development of the Stepping Stones proposal and the subsequent delivery of the work programme was impressive. As a result, in June 2011 during the Trust's legacy grant-making phase, Tubney awarded a grant of £1.3 million to build the organisational capacity of Buglife to deliver more, better and more sustainably.

www.buglife.org.uk

Brown–banded carder bee Bombus Humilis © Sam Ashfield, Buglife 2009

Marine conservation

"The seas are vast and incredibly rich, but they are being emptied of life at an alarming rate. We knew that we had to do something to stop this pillage before it was too late."

Jim Kennedy, Tubney Trustee

The Trust recognised the importance of marine conservation at a very early stage. However, our interest in supporting tangible outcomes resulted in an inevitable bias towards biodiversity work on land. Initially, our guidelines based on UKBAP targets were not applicable to the marine environment; it was not possible to do the equivalent of buying large tracts of heathland or planting miles of hedgerows. The stark reality that more of the UK lies below, rather than above, the water line, that what goes on there is largely invisible to the public, and that the rate of degradation was, if anything, worse than on land, alarmed us and gave us a real sense of urgency. We had to take a different approach if we were to support vital work to conserve the biodiversity of the UK's seas.

Convinced of the need for immediate action, we engaged with experts working in the field, both our NGO partners and consultants. The message we received was crystal clear: a UK Marine Bill and complementary devolved legislation could provide a vehicle through which to conserve the marine environment for the long term. Suddenly, marine issues became central to our strategic agenda.

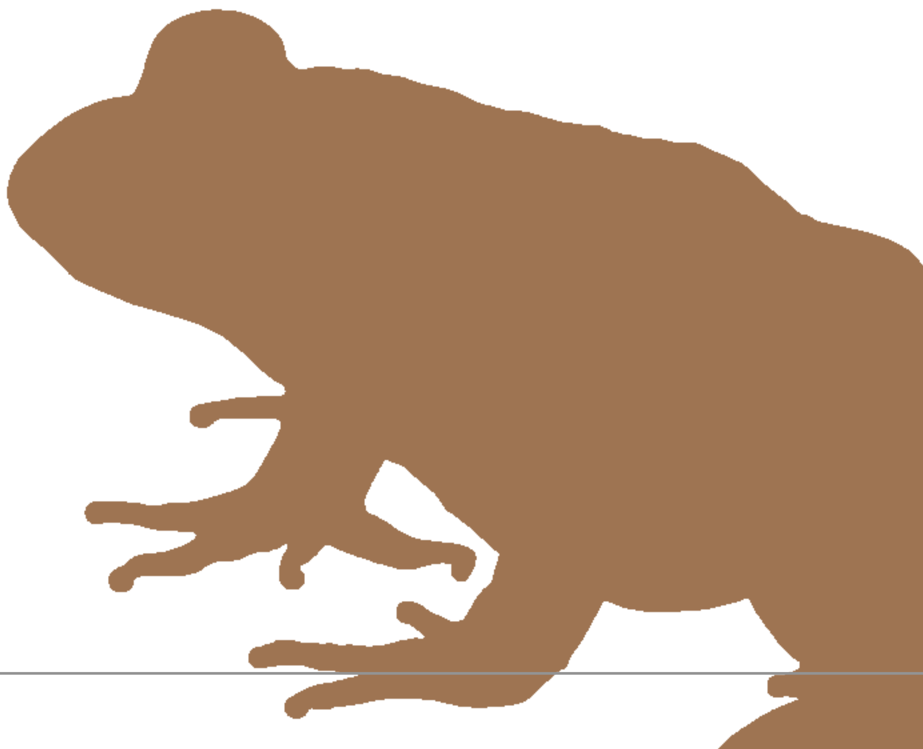
Supporting work on legislation took us away from our 'comfort zone' of tangible outcomes: campaigns are inherently difficult to predict and evaluate and come with significant risk. We certainly felt the risks were worth taking, due to the potential gains to be made. We supported work through the four Link organisations – environmental NGOs operating collaboratively within each and across all of the four countries within the UK – impressed by their track records of successful campaign work.

Despite our decision to focus on biodiversity within the UK, we were also well aware that the issue of fisheries was not one that could be tackled at a UK level. The Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) of the EU determines much of what goes on in UK waters and adjacent sea areas. We took the bold step, for us, of supporting work at a European level to influence the reform process for the CFP.

New tactics

New strategies require new tactics. As our thinking about subject areas developed, so did our views on how to make our grants work most effectively. In our early days, we made lots of small grants to many different organisations. We had accepted our donors' argument that our grants would not make much difference to charities with large budgets and reserves. But once we became more focused in our giving and the size of our average grant increased, we realised that we could not simply discriminate against the largest and wealthiest players. Indeed, in projects where economies of scale, depth of expertise, or brand names played a role, the larger organisations were often able to act more cost-effectively. This did not stop us bringing big and little organisations together to work on the same project, something we did on many occasions.

Indeed, Tubney has encouraged collaborative working wherever possible and recognised that partnerships frequently require significant funding to succeed, whether between NGOs, with stakeholders or other philanthropists. Often Tubney has played a 'hands-on' role in making such partnerships happen and supporting them in their early years.



Marine collaboration

Supporting campaigning to ensure effective marine legislation and its implementation

Date: 2006 – 2011

Grants totalling £1.8 million

In 2006 we encouraged individual NGOs working to influence the developing UK marine legislation to collaborate closely in order to engage with government and industry with the aim of ensuring effective protection for the biodiversity of the UK's marine environment.

We commissioned a report reviewing current and impending threats to the marine environment in UK waters. This and subsequent reports informed our support in this area and have been circulated widely to NGOs and other funders. Viewed as a crucial scoping exercise, the report is cited as providing key insights into the sector.

Through the establishment of a Fighting Fund and the provision of grants to cover the core costs of the campaigns in each country, the four Link umbrella groups – environmental NGOs operating collaboratively within each and across all of the four countries within the UK – were able to run a concerted campaign to positively influence the Marine and Coastal Access Act and complementary legislation in the three devolved countries.

Tubney worked closely with the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation in providing funding for this work. Joint funding supported the Link groups to work on the Marine Bill and provided a central fund to back specific activities designed to ensure the Bill delivered the greatest biodiversity benefit. A national steering group with representatives from the key NGOs identified the key activities to be supported.

The Marine and Coastal Access Bill covering England and Wales received Royal Assent on 12 November 2009. For the first time there are provisions in place which should lead to better protection for the UK's marine wildlife, including a comprehensive marine planning and licensing system, improved fisheries management, and new tools to protect marine habitats and wildlife. Complementary legislation has been passed by the Scottish Government, and the Welsh Assembly has also begun to implement the Marine and Coastal Access Act. Progress in Northern Ireland has been disappointingly slow but the Assembly is moving towards complementary legislation.

Subsequently, the Trustees decided to provide significant capacity building support to the Link organisations and a further Fighting Fund to support advocacy and campaigning work to ensure the effective implementation of the legislation, focused on the development of a coherent network of Marine Protected Areas throughout UK waters. This network is the most important tool within the provisions of the new legislation: the restoration of marine biodiversity in UK waters depends on getting this right.

www.scotlink.org

www.nienvironmentlink.org

www.waleslink.org

www.wcl.org.uk

Marine NGOs' Marine Bill celebration event © Marine NGOs

Guilliaumesse © Sue Daly, MCS

Our final years (2008 – 2012)

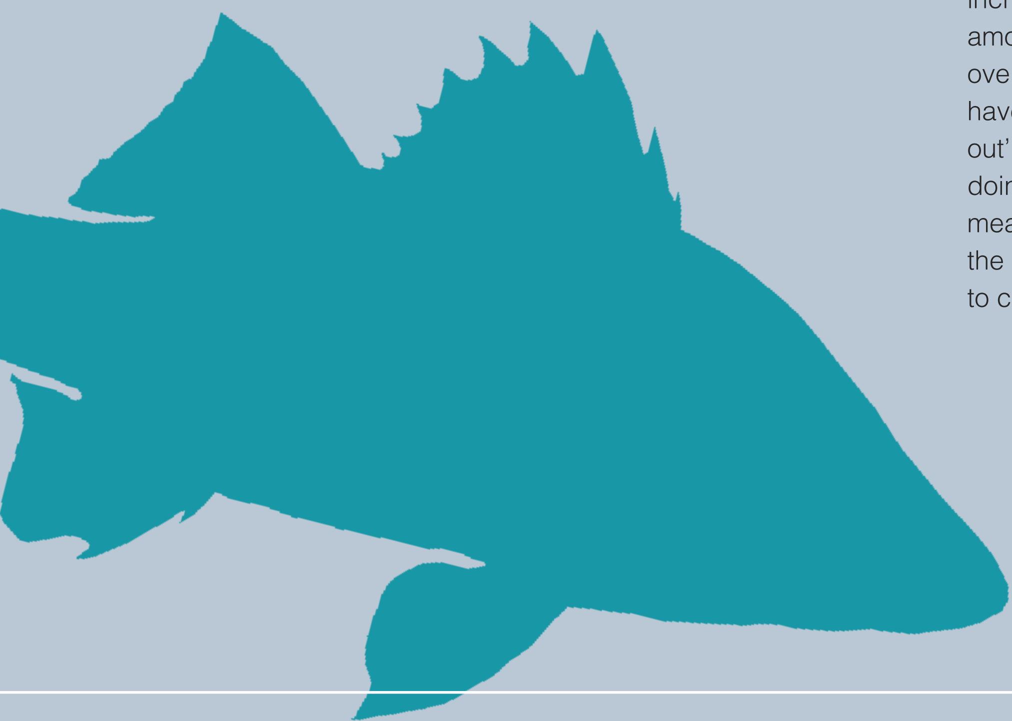
"There is too often an over-simplistic focus on the need to act 'in the best interests of the charity', an expression that encourages too much focus on the structure and group of people that is 'the charity'. Instead, the focus should be on acting in the best interests of your charitable objectives, something that is much wider, and may indeed lead to Trustees deciding that those interests require that a charity should be wound up."

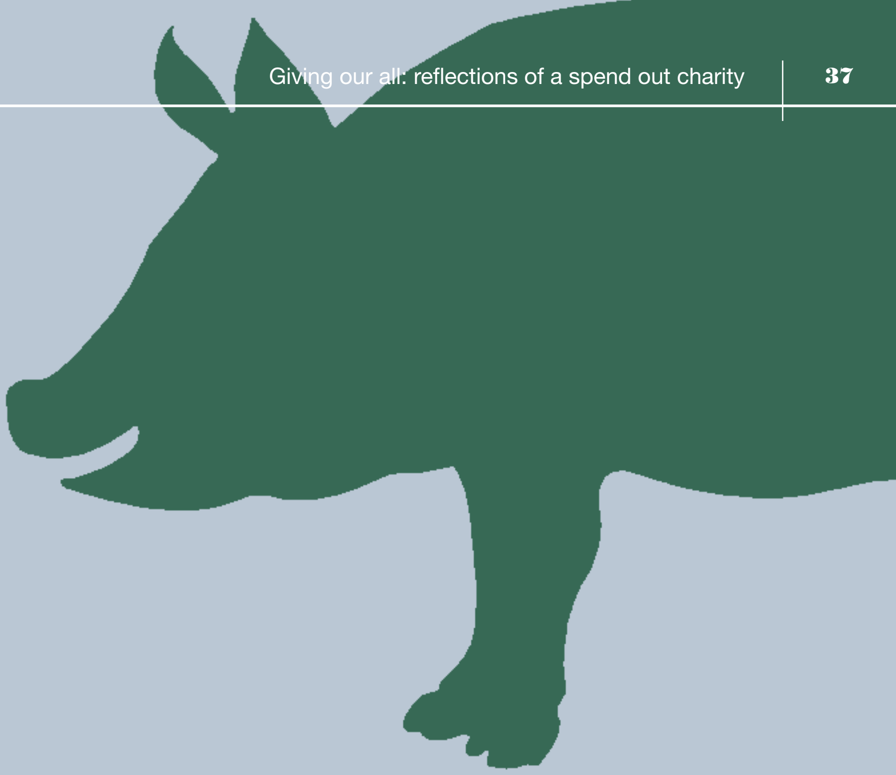
Jonathan Burchfield, Tubney Trustee and charity lawyer

Spending out

We can fast-forward now through years of productive grant-making to reach the final phase. Deciding when and how to move into our 'close-down' mode was almost as traumatic as our adolescent strategic review had been. But in some ways it was more straightforward, since spend out was not initially a strategic choice but an organisational imperative, almost the only one imposed on us by our donors.

In the end this constraint was liberating. Knowing we had a finite existence made everyone even more committed and focused. It made achieving our objectives even more urgent. We believe we have been more effective by concentrating our energies and resources over a shorter period than if we had acted over a longer one. If an organisation can do as much good in 10 years as in 20, then there is a double benefit to moving faster. First, and perhaps obviously, the benefits of action are reaped sooner. Second, all other things being equal, the Trust will increase its social investment by the amount it has saved in its own overheads. Not surprisingly, we have become advocates of 'spend out'. But it was not just a question of doing things more quickly, in fact, it meant doing different things. So in the end our strategic approach had to change once again.





It is perhaps incumbent on each charity to justify its continuing existence on an ongoing basis. At the very least, we recommend that all trustee boards take the 'what if' or 'why not' test – what would the charity do differently if it were compelled to spend out? Even if the Board decides against such action, the exercise could illuminate and strengthen existing grant-making policies.

Preparing for the end

For a number of years we had considered the demise of Tubney only in a general way. We were scrupulous in telling staff that their tenure with us would be finite and we were constantly warning our partners that we wouldn't be around forever, but this didn't have a profound impact on our day-to-day business. Ironically, it was the staff, who had the most to lose from the Trust's closure, who encouraged Trustees to think explicitly and urgently about the day of reckoning.

In the seven years since the deaths of the founders, we had awarded grants accounting for about half of our resources. As part of our natural evolution, grants were becoming fewer, bigger and more long-term. In preparation for one of our strategic Away Days, the Executive Director asked the Board to reflect on what had been achieved to date and whether we would be satisfied that we had made the most significant impact possible with our resources if we used the remaining funds merely to duplicate what we had supported up to that point. She encouraged us to consider whether we could achieve the greatest long-term impact by focusing on projects, or whether there was an alternative way of achieving our long-term objectives: by ensuring that the key organisations working in our fields had the capacity to deliver the objectives we shared.

This led to much discussion and soul-searching and, in the end, we came to the unanimous conclusion that we should stop thinking about 'us' and our goals, and start thinking more about 'them', our partners. What would the organisations that shared our goals and would outlive us need to realise their potential and our shared objectives? This was a crucial 'aha' moment for us and from this point on we sought to maximise the resources we could put behind what we termed our 'legacy'.

Our legacy

We had been on a steady trajectory since the inception of the Trust, moving inexorably towards fewer, higher-value proposals with fewer rejected applications. In the final phase we closed the door altogether to unsolicited applications; henceforth all proposals were invited. Our legacy grants would be almost entirely about increasing the fighting power of the organisations we selected.

More often than not 'building capacity' means acquiring new staff with new skills. Most of our grant money would have to go towards paying the salaries of these new people for a number of years. In many instances, new capacity in fundraising would be required to cover the costs for additional members of staff in the long term. People are expensive, and we were in no doubt that these grants would be on a different scale from our previous giving; in most cases they were the largest grants the Trust had considered and by far the highest the recipients had ever received. The planning process required both partners – the grant-maker and the grant recipient – to think more boldly and expansively than ever before.

Allowing space to 'think big'

It is fairly straightforward to pay for 'things', especially quantifiable things: leaflets mailed, trees planted, animals rescued, land purchased. But persuading governments, corporations and members of the public to change the way they think and act requires people with ideas, skills and relationships. It was this potential that we were buying into, not a specific scheme or objective.

Several of our legacy grantees told us that the awards we made to them, and the process involved in conceiving the plans for these grants, were life-changing. They relished the opportunity to look out at the horizon, unconstrained by internal limitations of time and money, to 'think big' about their vision and examine the obstacles that might be preventing them from realising that vision.

Not surprisingly, for charities so often operating in fire-fighting mode or working within a project funding model, the barriers they identified were usually due to a lack of planning or resources. We hoped that funding from Tubney would provide the opportunity for organisations to think about re-inventing themselves and that this would be invigorating and, eventually, liberating. And so it proved.

"The support of The Tubney Charitable Trust has been a real game-changer for us; transforming our primarily UK-based work into a truly European outreach. We are now improving the welfare of many millions more farmed animals in Europe and have seen major plans turned from ambition to reality. I cannot overstate the importance of the Trust's support to our organisation and the farmed animal welfare movement generally."

Philip Lymbery, Chief Executive, Compassion in World Farming

The legacy mindset

By 2008, our closure, which had sometimes seemed vague and remote, had become the centrepiece of all trustee meetings. We had a number of large-scale projects in development and we needed to honour these, but we wanted to marshal as many of our resources, both financial and intellectual, as quickly as possible for the final legacy push. We announced that from then on we would only accept invited proposals. These would be about developing organisational capacities to deliver our shared charitable objectives, rather than achieving specific immediate social or environmental benefits. Even so, we had an overlap period of nine months where we were also considering projects already in the pipeline, ones we had encouraged in principle, but that were still in development.

The close-down phase required a 'mind shift' from Trustees and staff alike. Our focus switched from individual projects to individual organisations and, in some cases, even to networks of organisations. Our vocabulary changed, as 'return on investment' was replaced with 'capacity building'. Our timeframe shifted as well. Indeed, during the life of the Trust we became progressively more comfortable with setting goals that were more distant and less precise, but also more ambitious.

Discussions on legacy grant proposals had entirely different parameters. To complicate matters further, some were inevitably with the same organisations that had specific project proposals in the works already. Everyone involved – our staff and Trustees, as well as the potential recipients' staff and Trustees – had to apply one mindset and set of criteria to project

applications, and another to legacy proposals. Only by being absolutely explicit and reiterating constantly which criteria applied to which proposals did we avoid confusion.

Previously, our grant agreements stipulated that any significant change in deliverables or timescale required approval by Tubney. Many of our grants were paid in instalments; to receive the next instalment the recipient had to provide us with concrete evidence that milestones had been achieved. For legacy grants we recognised that rigid outcomes would be counter-productive and that our impending closure made payment in instalments inappropriate.

By extension, though we still had a vision for the future, there was little point in setting long-term goals for Tubney in isolation. Our vision now had to live on in the organisations with whom we had partnered. It was their strategy and vision that mattered now, and we were careful to reduce neither their room for manoeuvre, nor their ability to adjust their plans and resource allocation to meet future needs. We spent time seeking to understand and influence their priorities and strategic direction, and now favoured grants with few, if any, restrictions, paid out in full immediately.

Working on trust

Up to this point our instincts had been frankly ‘controlling’. In this brave new world we had to take much more on trust. To acquire that trust and to be comfortable with ‘letting go’, we had to get more intimately inside the ‘mind’ of each organisation, to understand how it worked and what it really ‘thought’. Given how demanding we had been in our previous life, to encourage these organisations to understand and accept that we now wanted a different kind of relationship was not easy. And we had to trust their vision and values rather than seek to impose our own on them. They were the experts, the long-term players; our new role was to help them aim higher, to raise their game.

Our questions became more qualitative and less quantitative, more ‘open’ and less ‘closed’. What did they think was important? What resources did they need to achieve their objectives? To them this turnabout came as a shock, especially if we were still seeing through specific projects under our old methodology. We had our 'due diligence' list – a set of topics we wanted to discuss – but we weren't looking for definitive answers. Indeed, we discouraged quick, pat responses. Instead, what was important to us was that they had the commitment to address these questions.

To encourage organisations to open up, to expose their weaknesses and anxieties, we needed to take away the fear that they would say something we didn't like and 'blow' the chance of receiving a large unrestricted grant. So we told them upfront, but without making any formal commitments, that we were already convinced of the importance of their objectives, which we shared, and that we did not doubt they could deliver against those objectives. In other words, they didn't have anything specific to prove to us. We recast ourselves as a sounding board rather than an 'awards committee'; as a critical friend providing free business consultancy. Without realising it, we were beginning to adopt some of the attributes of the venture philanthropy model.

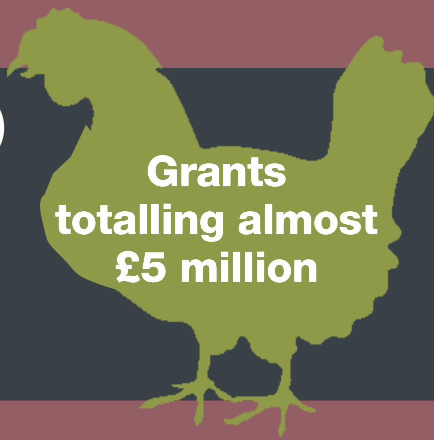
If at first the charities were confused by our change of tack, once they had understood what it was we were offering, they were delighted to be given time, space and access to expertise to enable to them to develop their own vision and associated strategy; one that was not dictated by the funder. And because we had long-standing personal relationships at both the executive and the trustee levels, we generally managed to get to the point of an open exchange fairly quickly.

The results of our legacy grants will not come to fruition for a number of years as the capacity building work will take some time to reap benefits for each organisation. However, each major proposal grew out of the long-term relationships we had established with grantees during our project-funding phase and was subsequently refined over a period of around two years. The results achieved so far give us great hope for the future.

Compassion in World Farming (CIWF)

Capacity building

Date: 2007 – 2010



Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) is Britain's leading farmed animal charity, and with an annual turnover of less than £5 million it has been punching far above its weight for many years.

In 2007 we provided a £68,000 grant for an initial 12-month feasibility study into the research, planning and development of an enhanced Food Policy Unit within CIWF. Its aim was to drive farmed animal welfare into the heart of the food industry in the European Union (EU). Spending time and resources on a feasibility study was a new experience for CIWF, but one from which they told us they benefited tremendously. Greatly impressed by CIWF's realistic plans, we provided subsequent funding of £2.34 million to develop the capacity of the Food Policy Unit, later renamed the Food Business Group. As part of this grant, CIWF has been able to dramatically expand its Good Farm Animal Welfare Awards which are a vital tool for engaging with retailers and promoting high animal welfare.

Working alongside CIWF over several years we had been impressed by the organisation's ambition, drive, and leadership. As we learned more about its vision for effecting change, we found compelling CIWF's argument that an important route for changing animal husbandry practices in the UK is through engagement with both companies and governments in Europe. CIWF was keen to explore the possibility of greater involvement in Europe and having learned a great deal from undertaking the Tubney-funded feasibility study for the Food Policy Unit, CIWF decided to spend its own resources to develop a detailed business plan for the expansion of this UK-based organisation into Europe. The Trustees found the completed plan to be thorough, thoughtful and realistic and, as a result, Tubney provided a capacity building grant of £2.5 million to enable CIWF to hire dedicated staff in Germany, France and Italy.

In the end Tubney made grants totalling almost £5 million to CIWF for capacity building. These have been instrumental in achieving significant outcomes and impact for farmed animal welfare, including:

- 40 million laying hens a year are benefiting thanks to the standards of CIWF's Good Egg Award which celebrates food companies and public sector bodies that source cage-free eggs;
- 174 million broiler chickens are living in more humane conditions as a result of the policies of the UK Good Chicken Award winners;
- Over 230 companies have taken part in CIWF's Award schemes, with leading names including Unilever, Prêt A Manger, Sainsbury's and IKEA transforming their policies as a result;
- One in five UK local authorities has committed to source only cage-free eggs – that's over 80 councils to date.

www.ciwf.org

Cows in field © Compassion in World Farming

Plantlife arable plant event in Kent © Plantlife

Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT)

Building Momentum for a Living Landscape project

Date: 2009 and 2010

Grants totalling £2.9 million

The future of the UK's biodiversity depends not only on the network of designated and protected sites and nature reserves, but also on the wider countryside in which these 'jewels' sit. The Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts' vision to create a Living Landscape offers an exciting model of how landscapes can be improved for wildlife through positive engagement with landowners and managers.

Throughout the open programme grant-making phase, Tubney had supported several projects delivered by individual Wildlife Trusts. The process of developing these bids, and our close engagement with applicants and recipients, gave Tubney a clear understanding of the strengths of this approach, which meshed closely with our desire to see work in the wider countryside complementing the network of protected sites. Over time the Wildlife Trusts made significant progress in unifying and strengthening their focus on the Living Landscape approach and we began a dialogue at the national level about how the approach could be strengthened.

The limited life and resources of Tubney meant that we could not continue to be the major charitable supporter of the landscape projects on the ground. To be successful, further funding sources would need to be found and the success of projects needed to be underpinned by policies and funding for landowners that were conducive to the concepts espoused by the Living Landscape approach. We therefore began discussions with RSWT about how our support might help it to raise the profile of Living Landscape work and, most crucially, to ensure that policy frameworks were influenced to increase the opportunities for delivery across the UK. We felt that the achievement of these two broad goals would be a fantastic legacy.

Our initial grant of £100,692 in 2009 supported planning and development work, scoping what had to be done to achieve this vision through, for example, influencing relevant policies, raising public awareness, sharing best practice and securing sustainable resources. In particular, it sought to influence the Natural Environment White Paper which was published in June 2011.

This planning work led to the submission of a proposal to Tubney for a major programme of work to deliver a Living Landscape. This would involve increasing resources at RSWT to directly deliver campaign objectives, together with support for individual Wildlife Trusts to increase skills and ensure that politicians were engaged and influenced in their constituencies.

The development of our relationship with RSWT was based on the successful delivery of the tangible outcomes we demanded during our open programme phase. But our work with the Wildlife Trusts also demonstrates the importance to Tubney of backing a broader concept, an approach we enthusiastically endorsed through a £2.8 million legacy grant providing capacity building and core support.

Although it is early days, this grant has already allowed improved communications with MPs at the constituency level, the appointment of programme staff, development of a monitoring scheme to underpin the Living Landscape approach with biodiversity data, and a development programme for key trustees and staff across the Trusts.

www.wildlifetrusts.org

What we learned

"Time and money spent planning – at the level of both the individual project and of the organisation as a whole – almost always reaps huge rewards."

Terry Collins, Tubney Trustee

The big picture

Recognising connections

Over time, as we gained more experience, we had become more focused in our grant-making. We focused on the two areas – conservation of the natural environment and improvement of the welfare of farmed animals. In doing so, we came to recognise that these problems did not exist in isolation. We began to see important connections to other problems and other organisations.

In seeking to simplify our internal grant-making we couldn't just ignore complexity and messiness in the real world. We needed to take a longer view, to take risks, and to take the time to see things in context. This meant demonstrating the relationship between our concerns and the dominant ones of our times. It meant engaging with other charities and not-for-profit organisations and encouraging them to cooperate with each other. It meant accepting that restricting our actions to the UK on its own was ignoring the inexorable trend towards globalism in politics and markets. And it meant facing up to the obvious: the natural world is a poor respecter of national boundaries and the food industry is increasingly international.

But beyond all of this it forced us onto the stage of public opinion and politics, even if we were only operating behind the scenes ourselves. We had to accept that sustainable progress requires shifts in individual behaviour and legislation. As these are the most difficult kinds of changes to effect, we had to accept the possibility of failure, that at least some of our money might be 'wasted'.

We also had to recognise the powerful forces that drive the market economy. Particularly in farmed animal welfare, we could see that any solution had to harness those forces, taking careful account of corporate and consumer behaviour.

Lessons learned

- **No problem – and therefore no solution – sits in isolation from its political, economic and social context.**
- **Accept the possibility of failure if the prize is big enough.**

Bringing people together

We and our partners preferred carrots to sticks; positive to negative action; reward to punishment. Given our interest in ‘landscape-scale’ conservation – the inter-connectedness of nature reserves and corridors for wildlife to move in-between them – it was absolutely essential that we had constructive engagement with the private sector; generally the farmer or landowner. Making them feel good about being part, indeed, having the central role in conservation became key to our natural environment funding initiatives.

Some not-for-profit organisations are uncomfortable working directly with the private sector. We welcomed it and found that, even where private sector representatives felt a project or a particular target was not in their own interest, they often gave advice on how such a project or goal could be modified to improve its chances of success.

We were also proud of our so-called convening power and believe we made the greatest impact when, because of our own independence and standing, we could help to bring NGOs, philanthropists, government, retailers and producers together for common purposes.

In the farmed animal welfare field we worked hard to make stakeholders in the private sector our allies and not our enemies. We wanted to ensure, for instance, that forums working to set standards for welfare measurement and food labelling involved as many key players as possible. Of course, there was a risk of stalemate or of descending to the lowest common denominator. But sitting down together and reviewing the evidence often identified areas of broad agreement or specific positive changes that could be made to welfare with little additional cost or effort.

Sometimes we were surprised by the receptivity of supposedly entrenched interests. Indeed, in some cases we found business more willing to engage with new ideas and ways of doing things than government. It was made clear to us, often by public officials, that getting government regulation to change would be far easier if major business interests were already onside. We often found, for instance, food producer and

retailing organisations eager to collaborate on developing new animal welfare standards or consumer labelling for animal-based products, even in the absence of consumer or government pressure.

Our success in bringing animal welfare organisations, business and government together to talk about shared interests gave us the confidence to get behind the ongoing campaign to use market mechanisms to drive better welfare through education, information and labelling on food products throughout Europe.

Lessons learned

- **Independent foundations are uniquely placed to bring stakeholders together, even where the interests of these stakeholders may appear to be in conflict.**

Building networks

While the community of farmed animal welfare organisations is considerably smaller than that which is concerned with the environment, at the time that Tubney ventured into this arena there was little explicit agreement about priorities, welfare standards and outcomes. This sometimes resulted in open competition between organisations and inevitably gave the public rather mixed messages. We ran the risk of individual organisations being encouraged to distance themselves from or even disparage others in the sector in the competition for funds and public attention. It took us some time to understand this dynamic.

Our grant-making in the farmed animal welfare sector slowed down while we built up a strong base of knowledge and relationships. We brought the various actors together, including food companies, into what came to be known as the Farmed Animal Welfare Forum. We paid for it to meet a few times a year, engaged an experienced, independent chairman and sat back to see what happened.

And what happened was extraordinary. The players quickly realised they had a lot in common. Once they had overcome semantic differences, they found they agreed on almost all the major issues. They understood there was a lot to be gained from coordinating efforts

and sharing information. Before long, the Forum decided it needed to put its worldview down on paper, to articulate a common set of long-term goals and a strategy for improving farmed animal welfare.

This was a unique and transformative moment. The result was a powerful, coherent and explicit statement from the Forum about what could be done, how it could be done, in what order it needed to be done, what it would cost, and who could do what. This informed not just grant applications to Tubney, but fundraising and strategic planning for the individual organisations. For Tubney, it was just what we needed: a clear context for setting priorities and relating one project to another. As a result, suddenly we began receiving sophisticated and comprehensive proposals with multiple partners collaborating to achieve a shared objective.

Lessons learned

- **Bringing people together because they share a common interest or have complementary skills can release enormous energies and help you align your strategy with others who have similar goals and values.**
- **Try to avoid positioning potential grant recipients as competitors for your funds; instead use your position to reward ongoing information-sharing and collaboration.**

Chickens in field © Compassion in World Farming

Farmed Animal Welfare (FAW) Forum

10-year strategic plan

Date: 2007 – 2009

As a specialist grant-maker, with expert staff engaged in partnership working with grantees and other stakeholders, we frequently commissioned research or facilitated discussion with and among stakeholders aimed at identifying challenges and opportunities for positive change.

Tubney facilitated the creation of the Farmed Animal Welfare (FAW) Forum, a group of influential farmed animal welfare organisations, scientists concerned with improving farmed animal welfare, and representatives of the food industry and food certification bodies. The Forum subsequently developed a working document for a co-ordinated and costed 10-year strategic plan to effect large-scale, long-term and sustainable improvements in the welfare of farmed animals. The report was used to inform our grant-making in this area and is cited as a seminal document in the field.

www.fawf.org.uk

"Tubney used a combination of its funding and persuasive power to bring together a unique cross-sector coalition of organisations concerned with farmed animal welfare. The Trust's deep commitment to partnership working has helped to establish much better relationships between farmed animal welfare organisations. They in turn are achieving more by sharing a sector-wide strategy, working together on joint projects and understanding each other better."

Mike Hudson, Chair of the Farmed Animal Welfare Forum and Director of Compass Partnership

Members of the Farmed Animal Welfare Forum

Beyond national boundaries

As a small trust, our expertise and resources were inevitably limited. So in the beginning we played safe. For practical reasons we restricted our giving to UK charities, ones we could meet with personally and where we understood the working culture. This had less to do with nationalism than with an awareness of our own limitations as an organisation. However, while we continued to work principally through UK-registered charities, we came to two important conclusions.

Firstly, national boundaries have little to do with the things we were concerned about. Improving animal welfare standards in the UK in isolation might lead to increased numbers of imported animal products raised in poor welfare conditions. Protecting UK territorial waters from over-fishing is essential, but fish do not stay within national boundaries and in any case, important though they are, UK waters form only a tiny part of the world's oceans.

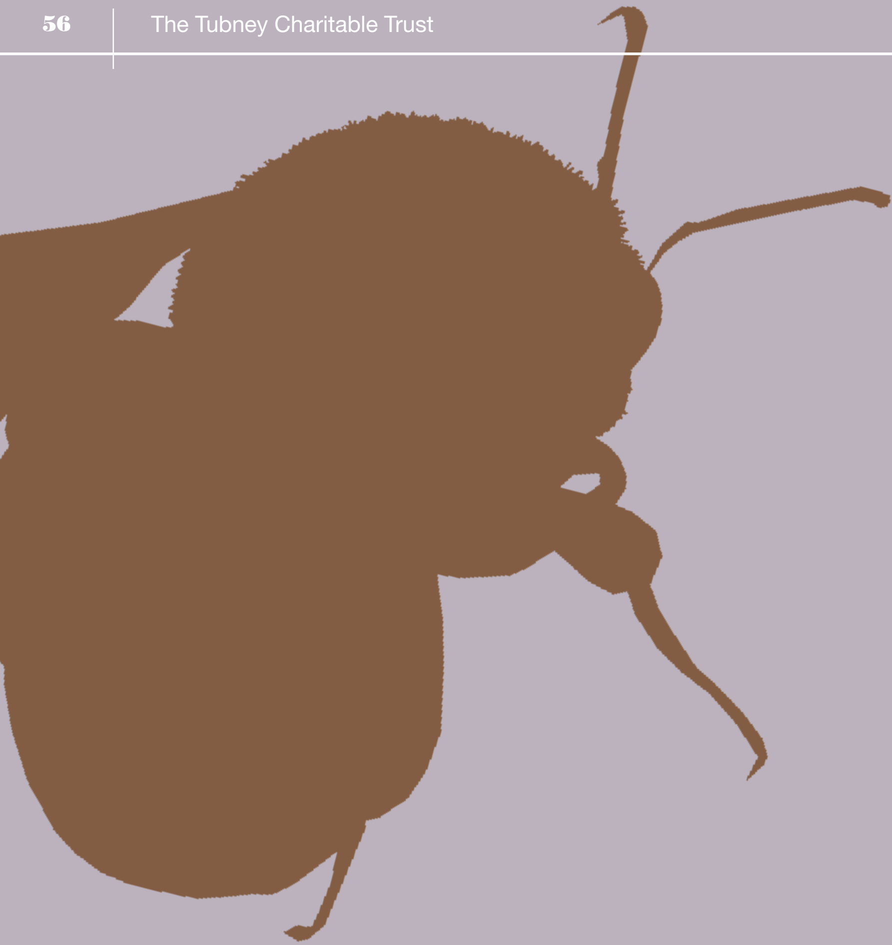
Second, Britain is part of Europe and Europe is part of the rest of the world. These connections are not just physical. They are legal, political and economic as well. We realised that we didn't need to have the expertise and connections ourselves to reach out beyond our shores. We had these by proxy already, through the organisations we worked with and supported.

With our consciousness raised we began actively to encourage our partners to 'think' and 'act', if not globally, then at least outside the UK box. We accepted that this might require them to expand overseas, which can be difficult. Even the leap from 'British' to 'European' was daunting, with more than 20 countries then making up the European Union. Choosing the right states in which to establish a presence, ones that would be pivotal in forming public opinion or in legislative votes, was crucial.

Lessons learned

- **Global issues need an international response and may require support for grantees to build their presence overseas.**

Spiny starfish, snakelocks, thongweed © Paul Naylor, MCS



Working with applicants and grantees

Dialogue and feedback

The relationship between grant-maker and applicant can sometimes be unhelpfully distant. The grant-maker sets out its criteria as clearly as possible and the applicant crafts a proposal that it feels will meet the published guidance. Even in two-stage processes, the invitation to submit a more detailed proposal may offer neither feedback on the initial outline, nor guidance on how the second should be presented to have the greatest chance for success. Without dialogue and feedback, the process can turn into a 'dating game', with significant time being wasted on both sides.

As soon as the Trust had appointed staff, we strove to ensure that this was not the case with Tubney. Applicants were welcome to contact staff before submitting an initial application to discuss their ideas and how these might be turned into an application. Sometimes, the guidance was negative, where it was clear that there was no chance of success – this saved considerable time for applicants and for Tubney. More often, it provided an opportunity to offer advice about the presentation of proposals and to ensure that applicants were fully aware of the Trust's preferences.

Trustees were presented with recommendations from the staff as to which organisations submitting initial applications might be invited to prepare a detailed proposal. Immediately decisions had been made, unsuccessful applicants were provided with feedback on the reasons why and, if appropriate, encouraged to re-submit if the bid could be changed significantly enough to make it likely to succeed.

In the case of successful initial applications for which match funding was an issue, staff were also able to suggest potential sources. We encouraged applicants to use Full Cost Recovery within their budgeting to ensure that core costs arising from projects were fully covered, and to include appropriate in-kind contributions.

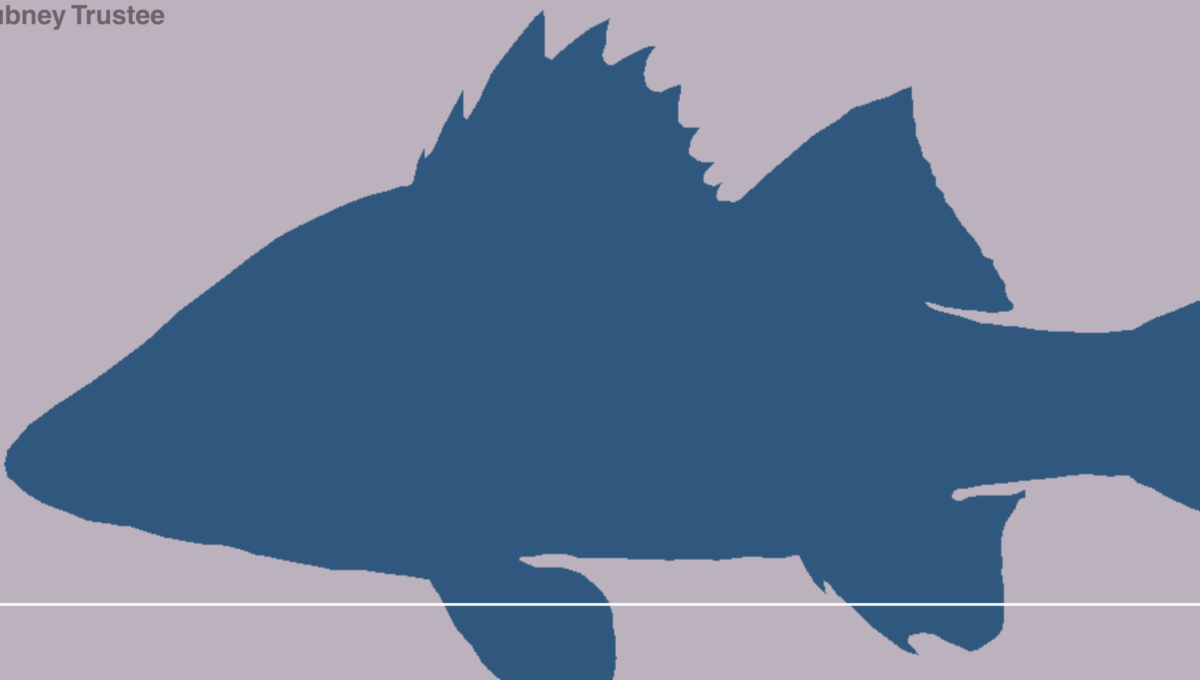
Tubney was keen to get out and meet projects and see, on the ground, what they were about. Almost all applicants being considered at the second stage were visited by staff and a Trustee. This provided an opportunity for us to ask questions, meet partners and make suggestions for additional information. While we asked tough questions of applicants, our engagement was never in the nature of a test. Rather, we were willing applicants to succeed, not looking for grounds to fail. Indeed, we found our close and challenging interaction with applicants to be invaluable, giving us real confidence that projects were far more than just plans on paper.

Lessons learned

- **'Overheads' cannot be stretched infinitely and it is a false economy to think as a grant-maker you will get more for your money if you disallow them.**
- **There is no substitute for face-to-face meetings to share vision and strategy.**

"We never saw the grant review process as a way of 'failing' applicants. Although it may have seemed that we put people through lots of hoops, these were designed to improve applicants' proposals. And because we went through everything in such detail at the outset, we seldom looked back."

Terry Collins, Tubney Trustee



Pew Environment Group

Towards the EU Marine Programme

Date: September 2009

Grant: £244,000

WWF

Towards Common Fisheries Policy Reform work 2010 – 2012

Date: September 2009

Grant: £520,000

The activity with the greatest impact on the biodiversity of the UK's seas is commercial fishing. Within EU waters most fish stocks have been fished down. 88% of stocks are being fished beyond 'maximum sustainable yield' – the point at which fish populations could increase and generate more economic output if fishing pressure were reduced for only a few years. 30% of these stocks are outside safe biological limits, which means they have fallen to levels where scientists fear they will be unable to replenish themselves.

Yet, because European fisheries are managed through the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) determined by the European Union, the ability of the UK Government to address this situation is extremely limited.

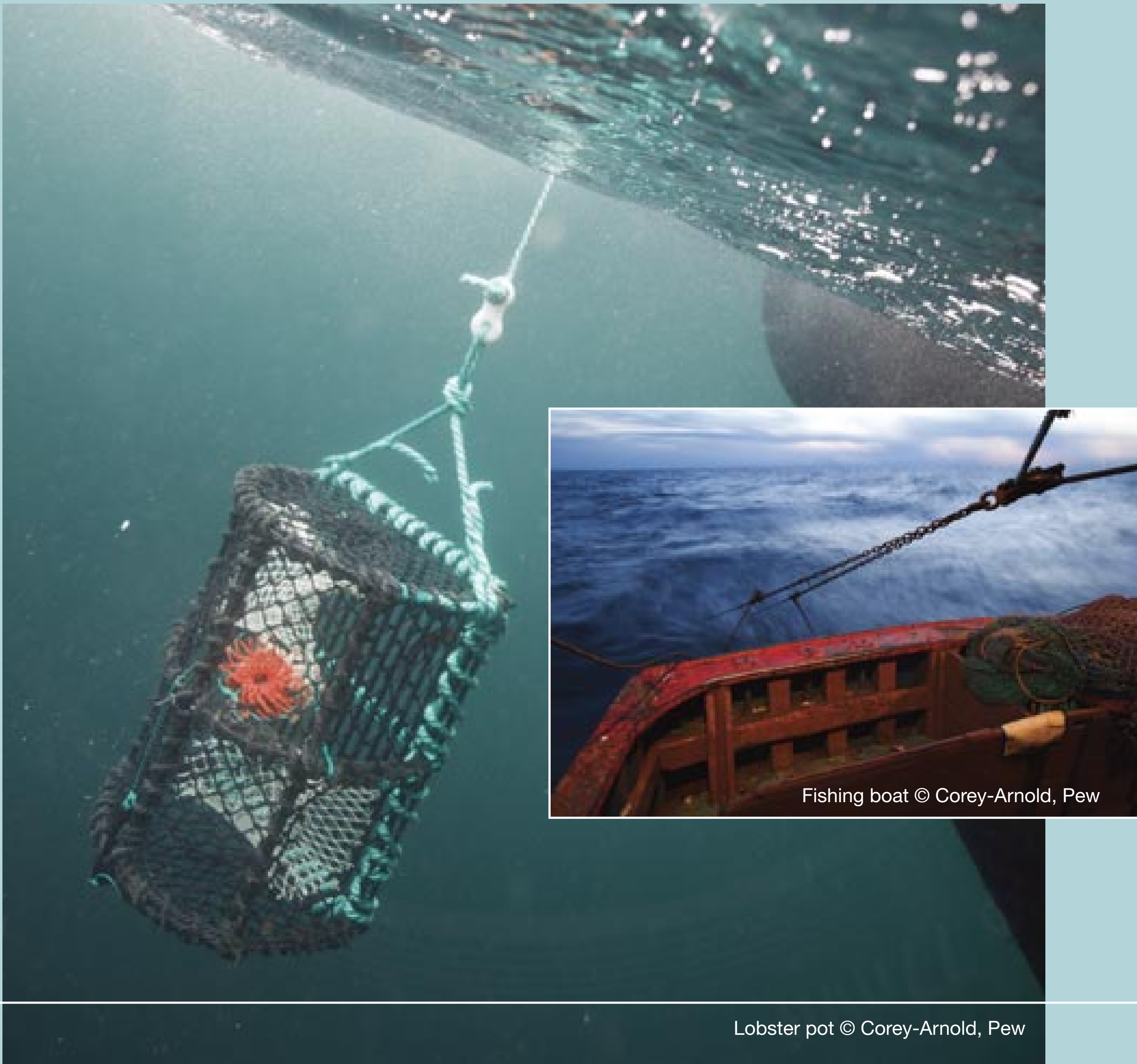
Despite successive reforms of the CFP, carried out with good intentions, even the EU has introduced the current reform process with an explicit statement that, *"…the policy failures far outweigh the successes. Europe's fisheries sector remains fragile. Most fish stocks in EU waters are over-fished. Catches have fallen to such an extent that Europe now relies on imports for two-thirds of its fish. We have too many fishing vessels chasing too few fish. This overcapacity is driving the overall profitability of the sector down, and exposing many fishermen and coastal communities to serious problems whenever the economic environment becomes harsh."*

The current reform process, which is due to be complete in 2012, offers the opportunity to address the situation and this opportunity must be taken, for the future of both the marine biodiversity and the fishing industry. The process of CFP reform has always been complex, with blocs of member states vetoing positive reform. New decision-making systems mean that this complexity has increased. Member States still have a say, so influence must be brought to bear on individual governments. However, the European Parliament and its members now have co-decision-making power and therefore influence is also needed at the European level and on Members of the European Parliament in their constituencies.

Tubney made grants to two organisations campaigning to ensure that the current reform achieves the best results for biodiversity – WWF and Pew. We saw that their approaches were complementary and that they would collaborate closely on the organisation of events, research and activity to deliver the campaign goals.

WWF has a network of national organisations across the EU and has delivered direct lobbying, advocacy, events and media relations – advocating for a move towards a long-term vision and management of fisheries. WWF has joined forces with key industry players to promote a shared vision for the reform, creating the WWF/Industry Alliance for the EU Common Fisheries Policy bringing together WWF, the EU Fish Processors' and Traders' Association (the European retail and trade association), Eurocommerce, and the European Community of Consumer Cooperatives (Euro Coop). This unprecedented Alliance is calling for the CFP reform to deliver effective management that will allow European consumers to make a sustainable choice when buying fish, and give fishermen a chance to earn a sustainable living.

Pew is seeking to bring together independent NGOs across the EU in support of reform and has set up a campaign coalition – Oceans 2012 – which now has 123 member organisations across Europe, representing the key NGOs concerned with this issue.



Fishing boat © Corey-Arnold, Pew

Lobster pot © Corey-Arnold, Pew

Pond Conservation

Towards the creation of networks of high-quality ponds

Date: June 2008

Our grant was awarded to support strategic work to create 5,000 new ponds across England and Wales contributing towards the new UK Pond Habitat Action Plan and acting as a springboard to the organisation's Million Ponds project. As well as seeking to create ponds for their general importance for a range of species, the project is also working with major landowners and specialist NGOs to create and manage ponds specifically designed to support targeted UKBAP priority species.


Hothfield Common © Jeremy Biggs, Pond Conservation

Pond Conservation is a relatively tiny NGO, dwarfed by some of the well-established organisations. Its small size might appear out of proportion to even the initial target of 5,000 ponds. However, the intention was never that Pond Conservation would deliver the target directly. Its work is based on sound scientific argument and influencing those with the land and practical resources to create ponds. Its job is to ensure that the ponds are in the right places and have the right designs to encourage biodiversity.

It also uses the scientific arguments to influence senior policy-makers, ensuring that the previously under-appreciated importance of ponds for biodiversity is recognised and reflected in policies affecting land management. Key partners in delivering pond creation include, for example, Defence Estates, which has immense landholdings and access to plenty of machinery for digging ponds.

Tubney was so impressed by the delivery of the project over the first three years that we invited Pond Conservation to submit a proposal for core support and capacity building. A subsequent additional grant of £394,000 was made for these purposes in March 2011.

www.pondconservation.org.uk

Evidence-based work

During our open programme phase, we gave a lot of attention to proper data collection, analysis and the publishing of lessons learned. We adopted a scientific, analytical approach to solving big social and environmental problems.

This approach meant three important things for our grant-making. First, projects are iterative and need to be adapted and improved as they go along. Grant recipients need freedom to do this. Second, peer review and expert opinions are usually needed to design at least the data collection/interpretation side of a project, and these often need to be brought in from outside. Third, a part of the benefit is the knowledge gained to support future work, possibly by other organisations. Dissemination is a project requirement and cost. It is also a benefit, if intangible, and is part of the return on investment. Tubney was active in putting applicants in touch with related projects to improve their project design.

In our legacy phase, the Trustees, having worked hard to build on the relationships formed during our open grant-making phase and to really get under the skin of legacy partners, recognised that we were now supporting an organisation's vision rather than work to achieve specific outcomes. It was clear at times that this was a unique experience for our legacy partners, but once the initial surprise was over, we feel that it was hugely positive for them and for Tubney.

While during our legacy phase we were less directly interested in measurable outcomes ourselves, we took steps to encourage our legacy partners and hoped they had come to realise the usefulness of our analytical approach and had taken on appropriate aspects themselves, for example, by establishing internal systems for business planning, data collection, reflection on what had and hadn't been achieved, and disseminating results.

None of this engagement from the Trust would have been possible without very clear and focused criteria. If we had been overwhelmed by applications because our criteria were woolly or too wide, we would simply not have been able to spend time with grant-seekers developing better applications.

Lessons learned

- **Rigour in reporting and evaluation strengthens individual projects and organisations and enables the lessons learned to be shared with grant-makers and grantees.**
- **Partners should use feedback reporting as a tool for self-assessment rather than just to satisfy a contractual requirement.**
- **An experienced grant-maker can play an active role in helping applicants to refine and improve their project design and evaluation.**

The Wildlife Trusts

Date: 2006 – 2008

Grants totalling over £2 million

Tubney was approached by the six mainland Wildlife Trusts in the South West, who were at the forefront of the development of what became the Wildlife Trusts' Living Landscape vision. Each of these Trusts had identified their own priority landscape-scale area for rebuilding biodiversity. The areas varied enormously but the approach shared strong common themes: providing support to landowners in a targeted way through the employment of advisory staff; building upon opportunities provided through existing agri-environment schemes and adding value to this funding; and focusing on priority habitats, but also not forgetting the importance of other complementary habitat types in the landscape.

Tubney was keen on this approach but wanted to judge each Wildlife Trust scheme on its merit. Therefore we agreed that the approaches would be staggered and we worked with each successive Trust from the South West to ensure that the bidding was an iterative process. Staff from the 'next in line' organisation attended our site meetings so that they could learn from that experience. From our perspective, the application process became smoother with each successive scheme and, more importantly, the proposals themselves became stronger and of increasing quality.

www.wildlifetrusts.org

Culm Grassland © Devon Wildlife Trust

Taking risks

Perhaps because there is never enough money to do all they want to do, and perhaps because they are only custodians of a charity's resources, or perhaps simply because people are by nature risk-averse, the decisions taken by most charity trustees are inherently conservative. Tubney was no exception at the outset, but over time we came to the view that independent trusts and foundations are among the few organisations that are able to take great risks, since we are not constrained by demands to make profits for shareholders or win elections. We were willing to support risky endeavours and to put money into pilot projects that had a lower probability of full success as they depended on changes in established business or farming practices.

In some cases, our aim was to influence consumer attitudes or public policy which would demand a change in business models and practices. In one instance we supported scientific research into the chicken genome in the hope that new breeds could be created (or old ones recovered) that would have fewer inherent health and suffering problems. We knew this was a highly ambitious and risky project.

In the conservation sector, we also learned that working through landowners was potentially more risky than directly acquiring land and supporting its management. But, given that most British land is in the hands of farmers, the former has much wider long-term impact.

In the end, rather than avoid risk, we actively sought it out. To some extent we redefined our mission as to embrace if not 'the impossible' then the 'very difficult'. If we, an independent highly-focused grant-maker, weren't prepared to take calculated risks, then who would?

Lessons learned

- **Trusts and foundations are uniquely able to take risks, i.e. to do what others dare not or cannot do.**

Farm Animal Welfare Trust (FAWT)

Novel commercial broiler genetic selection techniques integrating welfare and production traits

Date: April 2007

Grant: £1.5 million

Our grant was awarded to an ambitious, large-scale project with the goal of developing and testing a genetic selection process that combined efficient chicken meat production with higher bird welfare, and which would ultimately influence breeding. The current birds bred for intensive indoor systems are also used in higher welfare system production but are often unsuited to the outdoor living conditions and longer growing periods used in these systems. This causes significant welfare issues for the birds. The main aim of this ongoing project is to develop and test commercially a genetic selection process leading to a new breed of broiler chicken that meets the requirement of the organic and free range markets. It could also enable a higher welfare system of barn production (i.e. indoors systems in which birds have greater freedom of movement).

The project has brought together experts in genetics, animal welfare and chicken production, and has broad support from bodies as diverse as NGOs, commercial breeders/producers and food retailers. It is being carried out through a consortium led by FAI Farms Ltd (FAI), with implementation monitored by the FAWT.

Tubney's funding has allowed the FAI team to be built up around the project and to then operate at multiple levels throughout the industry. Progress is being made against the project's key outcomes, but, unfortunately, the project is still a long way from fully achieving the goals outlined in the original proposal.

During the period when the application was being considered and the grant approved, we recognised the tremendous need for improved broiler genetics whilst being made aware of the project's complexity and the risks involved, which were very high. As well as FAWT/FAI's proposal containing the ambitious target of achieving breed development and commercial roll-out within five years, the project was on a scale not previously undertaken by either organisation. It could therefore be argued that we were all naïve in considering such an ambitious proposal.

It is worth remembering that fundamentally, this is a research project and genetic research takes a very long time before any significant improvements are seen. Also, the speed with which technical and commercial milestones will be reached can be difficult to anticipate.

www.farmanimalwelfaretrust.org.uk

www.faifarms.co.uk

Chickens in field © Chris Sherwin

Managing risk

The world and the problems we wanted to address turned out to be rather more complicated than we'd originally thought. And the more we learned, the more we encountered gaps in our knowledge and expertise. The better we got to understand the issues and the more we got to know the senior staff of our potential grantees, the more we realised we had to put our trust in their judgement and abilities.

By this point Tubney Trustees and staff had been working closely with our counterparts in other organisations for as long as six or seven years. Whereas this forced us to think more broadly and flexibly about our own role, it did not lead us to abandon our methods and rigour. On the contrary, we felt it was even more important for our grantees to have good plans, good management and good evaluations in order to deal with this inter-dependability and complexity. Good 'business' disciplines we felt were more important than ever. Similarly, we encouraged them to seek and often offered to pay for external professional advice.

Lessons learned

- **Trust the judgement of your grantees, but do not compromise proper plans, management and evaluation.**

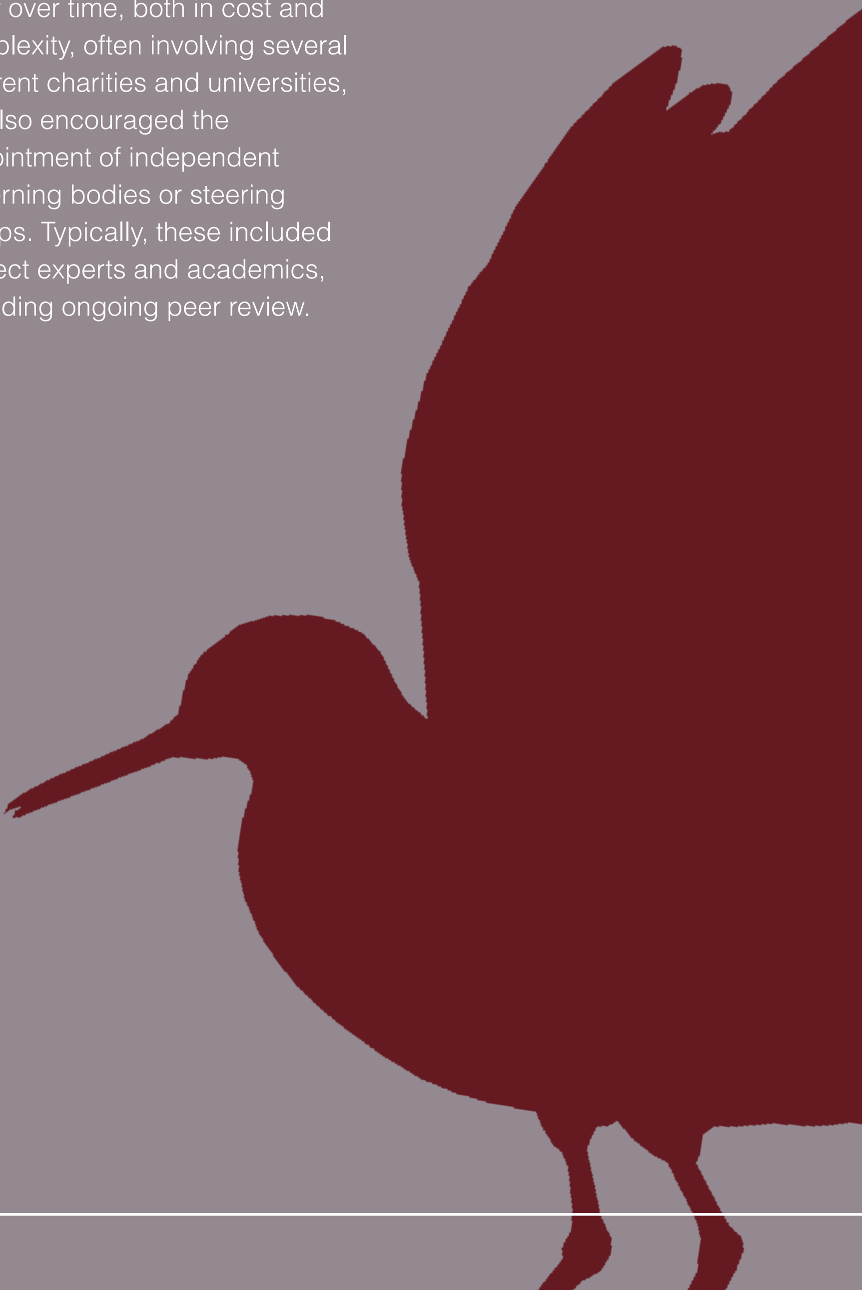
Bringing in experts

Although at the very beginning we had baulked at spending money on administrative support, in line with our founders' advice not to set up an expensive bureaucracy, we fairly soon realised that to make charitable investments wisely, efficiently and effectively we needed the assistance of professional staff. Similarly, after initial reluctance, we became more comfortable buying in external advice for ourselves or for the organisations working on the causes we sought to support. Such advice was very helpful to the Trust, even in areas where we had strong internal expertise such as finance and the law.

Advisors can fill skills gaps but they can also provide an independent perspective to Trustees. We sought professional expertise, either specifically to help us understand and get comfortable with a particular project, or to guide us in our giving to a new area. We commissioned peer reviews, as well as reports on the potential for philanthropic giving long-term in our core areas, and advice on what we should be doing to strengthen the charitable organisations addressing marine conservation.

We encouraged grantees to identify their skills gaps and not to be embarrassed to tell us about their weaknesses. Thus armed, we were able to steer them toward experts or trainers who could address these gaps and strengthen the organisation's capacity into the future. We frequently found that grantees lacked skills in socio-economic data collection and analysis. In nature conservation and animal welfare these are often needed to demonstrate economic viability when rolling out a speculative project on a larger scale, or to refute the analyses put forward by vested commercial interests such as food producers.

As the scale of projects we funded grew over time, both in cost and complexity, often involving several different charities and universities, we also encouraged the appointment of independent governing bodies or steering groups. Typically, these included subject experts and academics, providing ongoing peer review.



Without sacrificing their independence, these bodies often played an invaluable role in seeing hidden potential in a project and in helping to build on its findings and success in the wider community.

But while turning to outside experts for advice, we were careful never to defer to them. We used specialist advice to improve our own decision-making and encouraged our partners to do likewise. In fact, in our legacy phase we increased our direct contact with the trustees of our legacy partners, meeting with them on numerous occasions both formally and informally.

Lessons learned

- **Buy in expertise when necessary, even when you have that expertise on your Board – a second or more specialist opinion can be invaluable.**
- **Show grantees you have confidence in them so they can be honest and open about their weaknesses or skills gaps.**
- **The respective boards and managers of grant-maker and grant recipient should take the time to get to know each other well.**
- **Independent governing bodies for large complex projects, particularly where they involve multiple organisations, bring an invaluable extra perspective, and can identify opportunities and connections those very close to a project may miss.**
- **Make people feel good about what they can do rather than bad about what they can't.**

New Economics Foundation

Marine Socio-economics

Date: June 2011

Grant: £400,000

When Tubney decided that it wanted to provide significant grant support to work to conserve marine biodiversity, we recognised that our knowledge in this area was limited and that it would therefore be helpful to commission a review of the issues and the NGO sector working to tackle these. We were delighted that the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation also shared our interest in such a review and was prepared to co-fund its production. We invited tenders to deliver this review and appointed IMM Ltd to carry it out. The result was *Responding to the threats to UK marine biodiversity*, which included recommendations to the report funders as to how they as grant-makers might target funding to tackle these threats effectively. This report was used to guide and refine our grant-making in the marine environment.

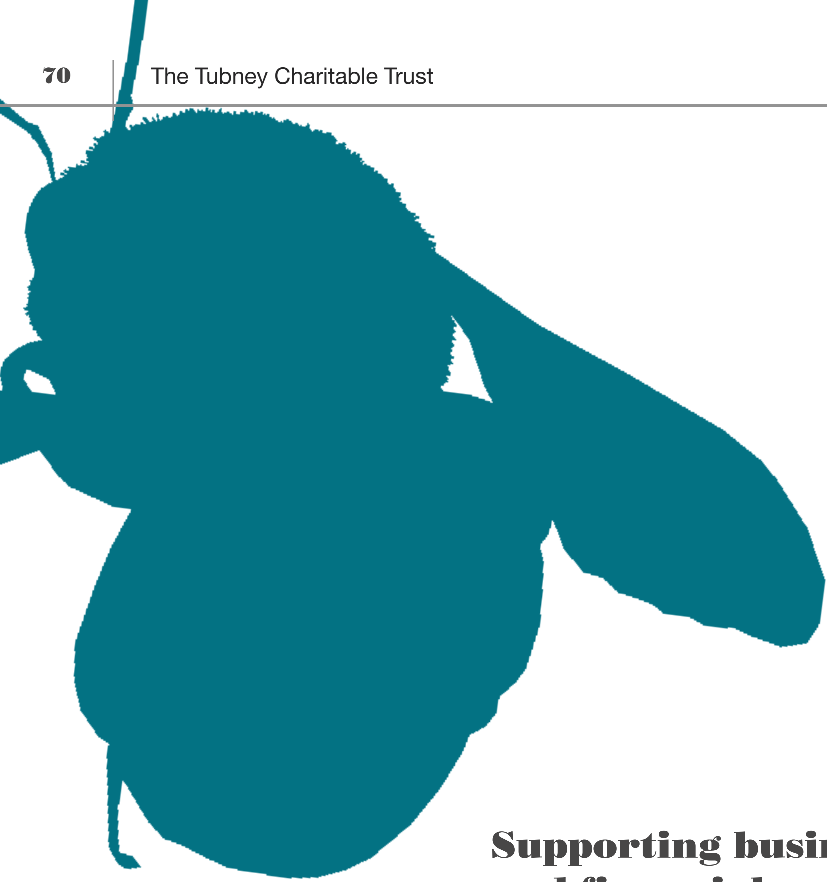
One of the findings was that the key threat in the short-term was fisheries. It was clearly vital and urgent that the negative impacts of fisheries should be reduced. It was equally apparent that any changes to fisheries would have social and economic impacts. What was required was change in fisheries that was sustainable and equitable but it appeared to IMM that many environmental NGOs, whose strengths were understandably in the science of biodiversity conservation, lacked an understanding of these human impacts.

Tubney commissioned IMM to produce a further report, *The socio-economic impacts of fisheries management and policy designed to achieve biodiversity conservation*, which looked in more detail at the available, relevant data on marine socio-economics and its use by NGOs, and made recommendations as to how we might provide grant support to bridge the gaps identified.

Tubney shared the results of both reports with the major NGOs working in this sector and, focusing on the second, worked with the NGOs to develop a proposal to support the development of their collective understanding and use of socio-economic data in support of achieving sustainable recovery of marine biodiversity in UK waters. In 2011 a grant of £400,000 was made to new economics foundation to support a consortium of NGOs working in the marine sector.

www.neweconomics.org/projects/fisheries

Short-snouted seahorse © Paul Naylor, MCS



Supporting business and financial planning

From our own early experience we knew that time spent on planning is never wasted. It is easy to see why some charities, fired with a sense of urgency and a strong task-orientation, focus on fire-fighting rather than long-term strategy development and business planning; Tubney in its early days was just such a charity. In our experience, few organisations allow themselves the 'luxury' of time and money, which would almost inevitably need to come from unrestricted funds, to establish a realistic strategy to achieve their long-term objectives.

We found we could raise the skills level of organisations permanently by offering to pay the entire cost of preparing a business plan for a large project – generally with the help of an external consultant – and in some cases making this a precondition for funding. Some organisations started down this path as a one-off exercise in order to satisfy Tubney's grant requirements on a specific project, but ended up seeing the need for more professional planning and forecasting across their organisation on an ongoing basis.

Similarly, many organisations perceived their principal challenge as convincing us that they had the passion, expertise and energy to make something happen. We rarely, if ever, found them lacking in these attributes. More often, our chief worry was about their management resources and/or abilities and, given the large sums that we were passing to these organisations, we were also concerned about their investment and finance strategy.

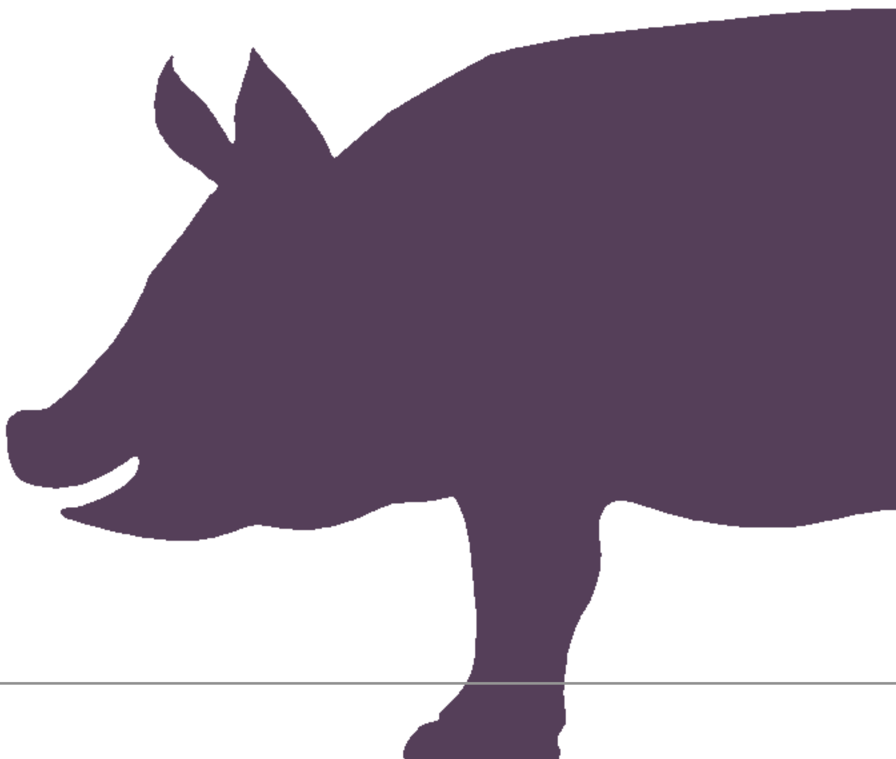
Tubney staff were financially fairly literate to begin with but they became much more so as a consequence of external training and working alongside our most financially astute and tenacious Trustee! As time went on we began to provide applicants with financial templates. It was not uncommon for plans to go through several iterations, with Tubney providing detailed feedback. Over time most applicants learned to live with and, we hope, even appreciate this sustained engagement on our part.

Financial management of assets was a different story altogether. We wanted to avoid overreaching our authority; we didn't want to tell other charities how to run their business.

But some were coming into considerable funds for the first time: we were giving them large sums upfront to spend over five or even 10 years. We tried not to prescribe specific investment management structures or policies, but, where we found such structures lacking, we suggested where they might get advice on how to put the appropriate framework and policies in place.

Lessons learned

- **Don't hesitate to spend money on planning; good business planning and financial skills are thin on the ground, and charity managers can be over-stretched.**
- **You may unleash huge potential in an organisation by funding all or part of its business plan (even if you can't provide funds for implementation).**



Marine Conservation Society (MCS)

Capacity building

Date: 2010 and 2011

Grants totalling £3 million

Like the marine issues it seeks to address, Marine Conservation Society (MCS) has had a relatively low profile with the general public, certainly compared to its counterparts focusing on land-based and airborne wildlife. Marine issues tend to be 'out of sight, out of mind' and MCS' profile and membership had not reflected its importance as a champion of the marine environment.

Nevertheless, Tubney was very impressed by MCS and recognised in it an organisation that punched above its weight with the potential to achieve far more. Like most NGOs, it had grown through steady development and opportunistic, project fundraising. Its focus was relatively short-term and the organisation had had little opportunity or cause to undertake 'blue sky thinking'.

Tubney began discussions with MCS about potential core funding and offered it the opportunity to think strategically and creatively about where it would like and need to be in order to achieve more for the marine environment. Its Trustees and staff recognised the need to raise its profile, attract more members and significantly and sustainably increase its unrestricted income.

We provided a grant of £209,400 to MCS in June 2010 to undertake planning work leading to a proposal to Tubney for core and capacity building support to help it deliver its vision for a bigger and better MCS. The grant was used to develop a new Strategic and Business Plan, bringing in consultants to support this work and to carry out market research to underpin the growth in awareness, membership and income. MCS involved its entire team in the process – Trustees, volunteers and staff. The quality of work carried out using the planning grant was extraordinary, and fully vindicated our early confidence in MCS. The planning process led to the proposal requested but its benefits to MCS seemed to us to reach far beyond the production of a proposal. Having the resources to think and plan, with the time and external expertise necessary, has palpably given the organisation greater confidence, energy and ambition.

MCS was awarded a core and capacity building grant of £2.8 million in June 2011.

www.mcsuk.org

Flameshell © Chris Wood, MCS

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)

Capacity building grant

Grant: £3.4 million

Date: June 2011

Throughout our open programme grant-making phase, Tubney supported a number of farmed animal welfare initiatives led by the RSPCA. These included an ambitious project working with key players across the food chain to deliver a significant welfare improvement for commercially-farmed ducks by ensuring the provision of water facilities that will allow proper expression of a duck's natural behaviours. Through this investment we were able to observe at first hand the RSPCA's 'problem/solution' farmed animal welfare investment model, which integrates knowledge, industry support and consumer pressure, all of which are necessary to achieve real change in the food industry.

Working closely with the RSPCA's Farm Animals Department (FAD), we were greatly impressed by the high esteem in which the FAD is held and the influence it has with national and international farmers, governments, corporations and standard-setting bodies. However, we quickly realised that the FAD was unable to respond to the many demands on its expertise and skills. The RSPCA itself was, of course, very aware of this issue and, over a couple of years, we were able to explore together how we might best be able to support work to improve the welfare of farmed animals by strengthening the capacity and resilience of the FAD within the RSPCA.


Pig Welfare © RSPCA

To assist the RSPCA in thinking through its options, we provided an initial planning grant of £60,000 towards:

- The commissioning of a management consultant to provide recommendations on the restructuring of the RSPCA's FAD and its relationship to other RSPCA departments to enable the FAD to achieve more efficient and effective working and to maximise its potential to deliver future plans;
- A scoping exercise to develop fully the business case for the RSPCA consultancy service as part of the RSPCA's development of its corporate engagement strategy.

The consultant's reports suggested simple and effective ways of expanding the output of the FAD through the hiring of additional staff, while also streamlining processes and establishing sources of sustainable income for the FAD and the RSPCA. The Trust awarded the RSPCA a grant of £3.4 million to implement these plans for a more robust and sustainable farmed animal presence in the UK and internationally.

www.rspca.org.uk

Size matters

The organisations we worked with over the years came in all shapes and sizes. Some, such as the RSPB or Comic Relief, had assets in the tens of millions. By contrast, some community action groups were spending just a few thousand pounds in most years and in some years nothing at all. Our initial prejudice had been in favour of 'the little guys'. But, while we continued to admire and support many organisations punching above their weight, as we became more experienced, we began to see the advantages of size in many instances. Particularly once we moved into legacy mode, we positively discriminated in favour of, if not always 'big' players, then certainly those we felt would still be in business and making a difference well into the future.

There were important exceptions, mostly in our biodiversity programme. Here we found some very small charities whose expertise and focus filled in important gaps that might easily have been overlooked by their more broad-based peers. Some, like Buglife, were concerned with relatively unpopular species groups. Others, such as Pond Conservation, were trying to save a unique, under-appreciated and threatened habitat.

In some instances, the amount of time and attention we gave these organisations was out of proportion to the size of the grants: we felt they could benefit from a closer and longer-term exchange of ideas and advice. Nonetheless, in such cases, even relatively small sums were often transformative. We thought of these almost like start-up companies. Naturally, the risks of giving them money were higher, but we felt the return on our investment, if successful, would be higher too. We wanted to be sure as well that these organisations were scalable, that the management and Trustees were capable of taking full advantage of an injection of considerable new funding, and that they could sustain themselves at this higher level once our money had run out.

Lessons learned

- **Focus on organisations best equipped to make a sustained difference in the future, rather than those that seem to need the money most.**

Sharing lessons learned

We were committed to disseminating experiences and lessons learned for two reasons. On one level we worried that what one charity had worked out through graft and trial and error was not being transferred to other charities facing similar problems. On another, we were keen to distil our own learning as an organisation.

From the outset we seemed constantly to come up against a problem in one organisation that another organisation we were working with had already resolved. The issue of membership retention was a classic example. While we generally asked for a dissemination plan for a major project or provided subsequent funds for publications or conferences, we realised that dissemination isn't just or primarily about a stock or record of specific knowledge that can be captured in a formal manner. Probably more important were the informal contacts and networks between grant recipients, which staff were encouraged to facilitate.

Because we were keen on identifying tasks, roles and outcomes, it took us a long time to accept that much of the dissemination we sought was best achieved informally, on an ad hoc basis, without our mediation or control, in the tradition of peer-to-peer learning. So we did our best to bring people together to share what they had learned. Often our role or the role of advisors was to summarise and articulate what the organisations were saying. Despite the amorphous nature of this communication we did our best to log and monitor what we were doing across the board in this area, producing summary documents and organising meetings specifically to review our overall dissemination plans. Finally, we realised there where some things we wanted to articulate for ourselves and for like-minded grant-makers. This is how this booklet came into being.

Lessons learned

- **Sharing experiences, knowledge, best practice and the lessons of failure means better progress for all and avoids wasting precious resources. This is particularly important in the fragmented and under-resourced charitable sector.**

The Trustee Board

Keeping the same Trustees

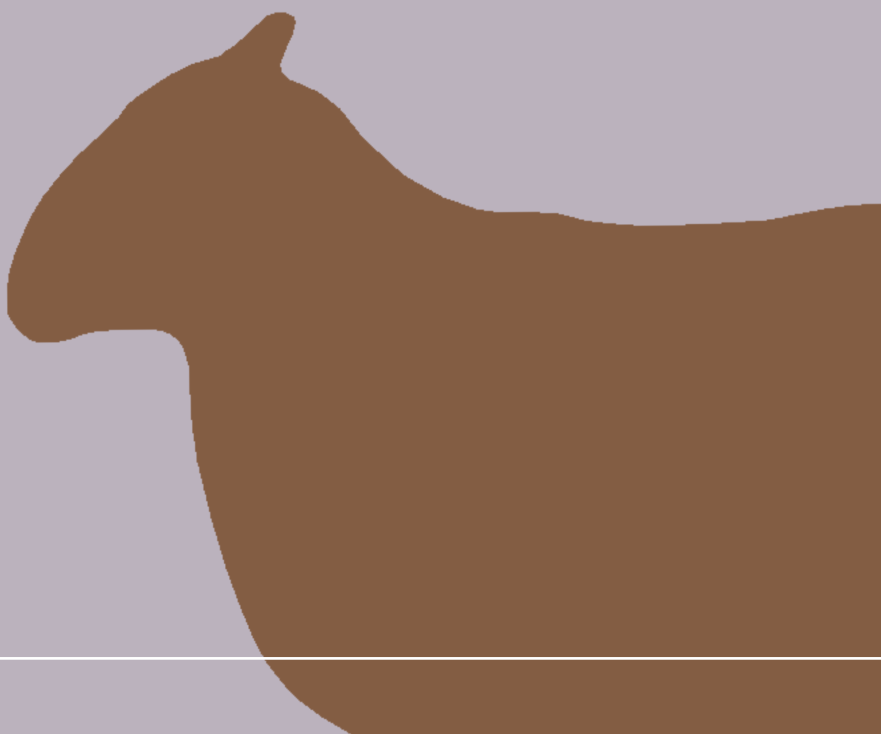
Although the same four individuals served as Trustees throughout the life of Tubney, or at least since the deaths of our founders, it would be a mistake to think we were the same people at the end as at the beginning. It has been a tremendous personal growing experience for each of us.

The Board was very careful to conform both to the legal guidance issued by the Charity Commission and to best practice in the sector. We set out to be a learning organisation and gave significant time to reviewing previous grants, grant procedures, board preparation and board performance. Indeed, one of our number is a practising charity lawyer. We took expert advice on a variety of legal, technical, financial and human resource issues and made sure that we were fully aware of our responsibilities. We tabled discussions on governance at each trustee meeting.

But in one important aspect we consciously broke best practice guidance: the same four Trustees sat on the Board throughout all of the last 10 years of the Trust's life. During that time two of the four served as chairman. Two are lawyers; two are businessmen. All are white middle-class men of middle age. We talked about expanding and renewing the Board on a number of occasions, but each time we decided against. We agreed informally on a rule to allow a majority of Trustees to remove a Trustee should they become obstructive or unable to perform their duties – happily this never occurred.

We had been chosen by the donors, but there was nothing stopping us from recruiting additional Trustees or agreeing on fixed terms for Trustees. Why didn't we? Were we enjoying ourselves too much to want to share 'power' with others? Were we too comfortable or complacent? These are difficult questions to answer with complete honesty. All we can do is recount the reasons why, each time we considered it, we decided not to change the Board's composition.

The donors had selected as Trustees two lawyers and two people who had worked with Miles Blackwell in the family business.



As it happened, the first two knew each other chiefly through their professional work on behalf of the donors; the two from the family business had known each other and been good friends for many years. Although they had very different background and interests, one thing the Trustees had in common was a personal relationship with our late donors.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the symbolic and emotional importance of this common history. It was a bond between us and a fixed point of reference. When we were undecided or in disagreement, someone on the Board would invariably posit what the donors would have thought or wanted. It was something we used to move us on or to defuse a particularly heated exchange. This ritual reminded us why we were there and helped us to renew our connection to the founders and to each other. Anyone joining the Board without that personal link to the donors might have been at a disadvantage.

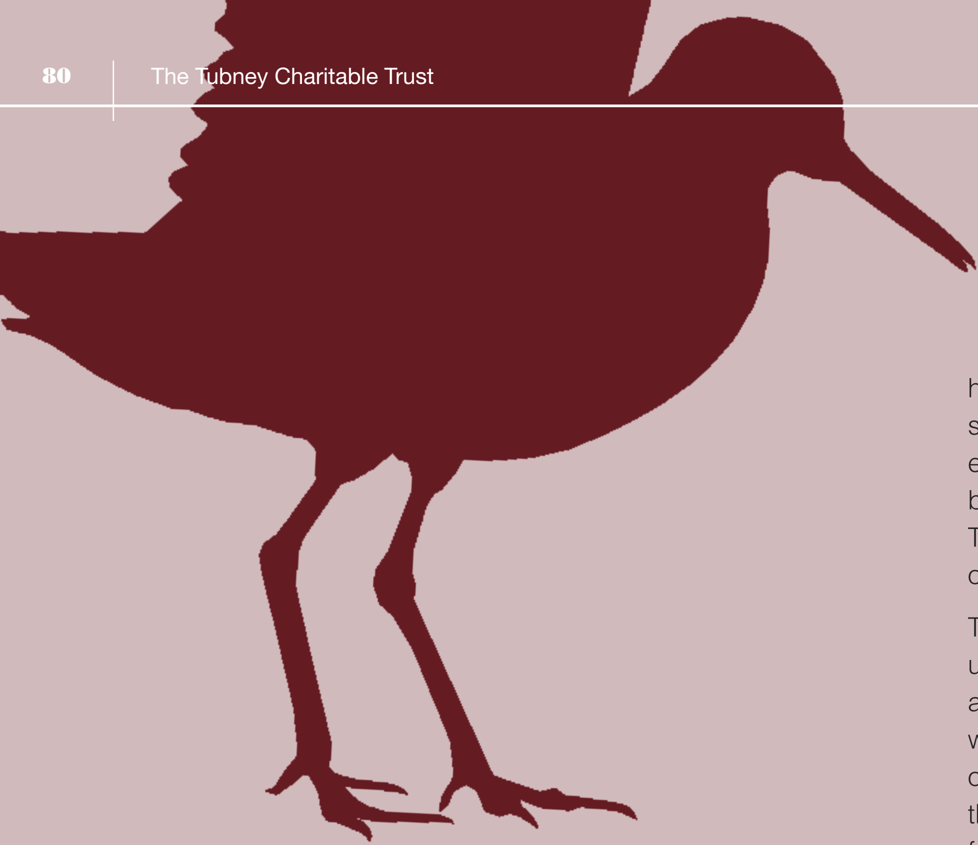
At the outset at least, we seemed between us, providentially, to have the broad mix of the background and experience appropriate to the Board of a charitable trust: communications, human resources, charity law, publishing, finance and accounting, project management, and strategic planning. More importantly, we got on well together, but not too well. When we had arguments they were generally about the issues, not about egos. Everyone felt their contribution was both necessary and valued. The mutual appreciation and collective responsibility were highly motivating. After all, with the accrued income on the original portfolio, we had almost £65 million to dispose of. A similar sense of collegiality infected the staff and the same continuity and commitment prevailed. It felt like a winning team and we were reluctant to tamper with it.

With long-standing Trustees, one issue that can arise is trustee fatigue, especially in the spend out phase. The Trustees can see the

end in sight but have to increase their work-rate or engagement short-term to make it happen on time. The most demanding and stressful time of Tubney's life, for both staff and Trustees, was its final phase. Our payout rate had increased dramatically and in addition to routine administrative duties we had a long 'closing down' checklist to work through. Lease periods, service agreements, staff contracts, grantee contracts, investment liquidation, accounts, merger – all had to dovetail. We had to select an end date nearly two years ahead and ensure that everything was completed by that date.

Lessons learned

- **Board review is essential.**
- **Don't under-estimate the value of staff and trustee continuity and experience.**



Becoming experts in our core areas

It appears to us that the Trustees became far more directly involved in the selection of specific projects and individual organisations than many of our peers in other organisations. We went on site visits, worked alongside the executive team in critiquing preliminary drafts of proposals, and helped review grant guidelines and standard contracts. Over time, and especially after our grant-making became much more focused, the Trustees became very well informed on our core funding areas.

The amount of time trust affairs took up varied from Trustee to Trustee and from month to month. There were, however, prolonged periods of intense activity where some of the Trustees who were no longer in full-time employment were giving the Trust two days a week. Because there were only four Trustees, and we had an effective system of subcommittees that met between trustee meetings, it was possible when necessary to make major decisions within hours. When, for example, the financial markets looked shaky in early 2008, it only took an hour's conference call between the four Trustees to agree to divest entirely of equities immediately.

Lessons learned

- **Divide up administrative, background and preparatory work between Trustees so that full trustee meetings can be devoted to the 'big' issues.**

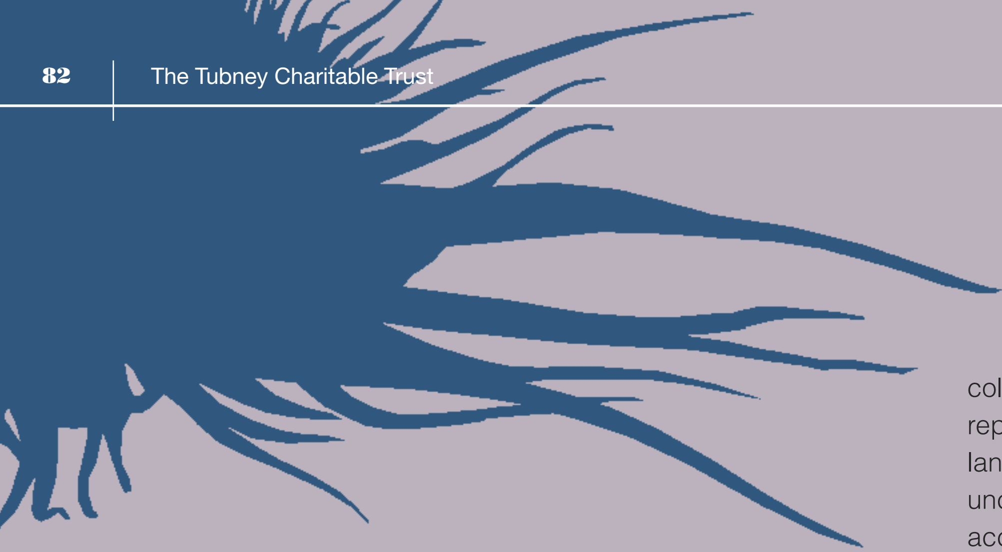
Relationship between Trustees and staff

For the staff this intensive engagement by the Trustees was both a frustration and a blessing. They literally had the Trustees looking over their shoulders. Sometimes this must have been a nuisance; at other times an asset – when they needed help of either a technical or tactical nature, board members could be called on to come to their aid. No doubt this blurred the line between executive and non-executive roles.

However, to maintain good governance, we ensured that important decisions were made on the basis of formal papers and full discussions at minuted board meetings. And because board meetings were so important and the role of each person crucial, we had virtually 100% attendance of all staff and Trustees at all the quarterly board meetings. Since 2008 and the beginning of our spend out phase, we also had monthly conference calls between all Trustees facilitated by the Chair, which were seldom missed by any.

Lessons learned

- **Teams of trustees and staff working shoulder-to-shoulder can be very effective, but maintain the formal procedures of good governance, no matter how small or close-knit the team.**



Watch your language

Every organisation creates its own language to express its values, intentions and customs. To be effective it must be a living, breathing vocabulary, not buzzwords imported from the press or management handbooks. Of course, the language we created at Tubney adopted concepts in general currency within the charity sector and society at large. But we needed to make them our own. Interestingly, our own internal definition of these terms evolved over time to accommodate what we had learned and where we were in the Tubney life cycle.

At the end of the day, neither our definitions nor even the words per se were important: sustainability, measurable outcomes, collaboration, connectivity, replicability, manageable, landscape-scale, transformative, uncharismatic, legacy, accountability. What mattered was our repeated effort to define and redefine our terms explicitly, and the shifting rank order of these qualities as positive attributes in grant proposals. ‘Pump priming’ and ‘seed corn’, for example, were key concepts in the early days when we saw ourselves as providing the ‘spark plug’ more often than the engine. We remained dubious throughout about ‘pure research’ but keen on ‘best practice’, and even keener on ‘dissemination of best practice’. We had endless discussions about what ‘legacy’ meant.

In board meetings we often called a halt to proceedings to talk through yet again what we meant by a particular shorthand descriptor. Though at the time it often felt like a frustrating distraction from the formal agenda, the time was never wasted. Indeed, such deliberations played a key role in moving us forward. Our progress was often propelled by the dialectic of two opposing views around a single word or concept. We chose our words, then defined them, then re-defined them. The executive team, which participated fully in these debates, patiently and repeatedly sought and offered clarification so its members could in turn provide clear guidance to grant applicants.

Lessons learned

- **The language of an organisation will change in line with its strategy and vision. Time spent clarifying terms and defining words, particularly as their meanings change, strengthens and gives depth to the strategy and ensures everyone is giving the same message to the outside world.**

Spend out

"There is no question in our minds that 'spend out' focuses the collective mind and resources of a trust in an extraordinary way and can do more to achieve a trust's long-term goals than a slow, modest, and possibly uninspired, perpetual outward flow of funds. Equally, no trust should head down this path without realising that it can be difficult and untidy. Getting all aspects of the operation to dovetail – from leases and employment contracts to grant contracts and final accounts – requires outstanding planning and often quick decision-making."

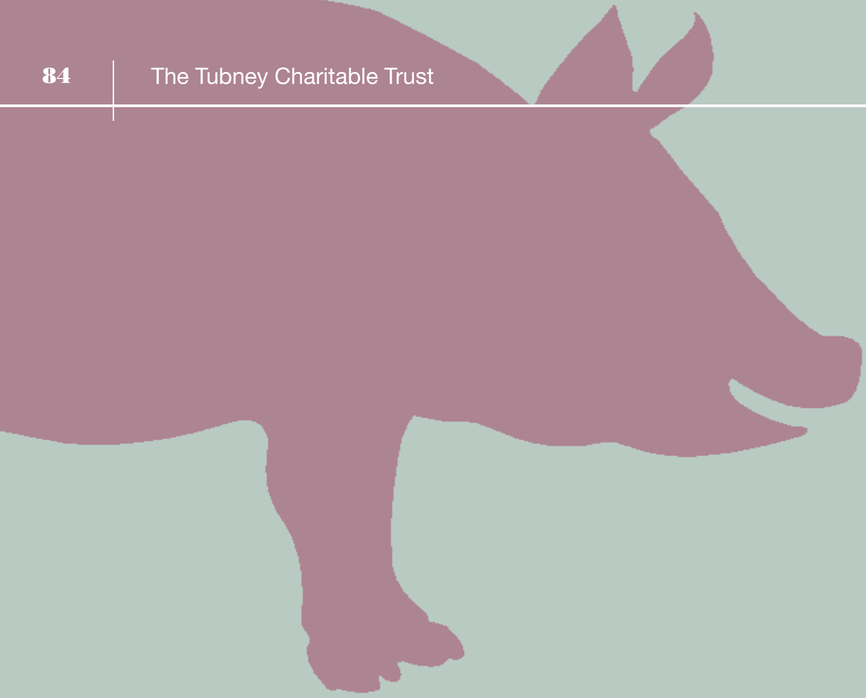
René Olivieri, Chair of Tubney Trustee Board

Why do it?

Although spend out was a given for the Tubney Trustees – an explicit wish of the donors – we had no trouble seeing its attractions. In the private sector competitive pressures drive companies to acquire and merge. No such pressures exist in the charity sector, so it could be argued that there are too many charities with too few resources and too little expertise. Every charity's Board of Trustees should periodically ask itself whether the charity is truly necessary, i.e. whether it could achieve more by merging or combining its resources and expertise with another charity or charities.

Lessons learned

- **Live every year as if it were your organisation's last and ask yourself, why shouldn't it be?**



Encouraging philanthropy

For us, an essential part of preparing for our own closure was to consider who would fund 'our' areas when we were no longer there. In other words, where were the future philanthropists and grant-making charities who would step into the financial breach created by our demise? And just as we didn't want the financial base to shrink once we were gone, so we worried that the knowledge we had accumulated over time would disappear. It would have been hypocritical to demand a dissemination plan from our partners and not have one for ourselves. We felt we had a responsibility to tell other funders why our sectors mattered, and what we had learned about the needs and capabilities of those sectors.

'Encouraging philanthropy' became part of our mission as it dawned on us how narrow the funding base was for some of the causes we supported. Realising our spend out policy meant more today for some organisations but commensurately less tomorrow, we set out to understand the barriers to attracting new funders by commissioning independent professional research. We also tried to pull in new players by encouraging match-funding wherever feasible. Finally, we worked with our chosen organisations to develop their own fundraising skills. In some cases we funded research or consultancy to map our concerns against those of other grant-makers, hoping to make inter-relationships explicit.

Lessons learned

- **Think hard about how you can connect your concerns to those of new funders and philanthropists with interests in related issues.**

One of our stated objectives was to galvanise more and better philanthropy through encouraging reflection on the most effective use of charitable resource. We did so by providing research and guidance on how to increase philanthropic giving to our sectors long-term.

For example, the Trust has:

- **Established a group for organisations that have decided to spend out;**
- **Supported the publication of two booklets on the subject:**

  Spending Out: learning lessons from time-limited grant-making;

  The Power of Now: Spend Out Trusts and Foundations in the UK;
- **Provided a grant to the Association of Charitable Foundations to promote effective foundations;**
- **Fostered the growth of the Environmental Funders Network through serving on the steering committee and the awarding of a capacity building grant;**
- **Supported the creation and development of a 'food funders' forum', a network for philanthropists concerned with food-related issues, whether this be obesity, international development or farmed animal welfare.**

Ten reasons to consider spending out

1 To help address an immediate need

Needs exist today, so why not accomplish as much as possible with substantial support in the short term rather than rationing funds over a longer period? Some opportunities simply cannot wait for the future, such as the purchase of land to save it from development, for example. And investments now – in the education of young girls in Africa which has been shown to dramatically reduce poverty rates, for example – offer the promise of high 'returns' that are hard to ignore.

2 To maximise the amount of money available to accomplish as much as possible in the short term

By spending its capital, a trust or foundation is able in the short term to substantially increase its payout rates to the causes it supports, significantly enhancing the impact even a small or medium-sized trust is able to achieve.

3 To take advantage of the 'time value' of money

The 'time value' of money is a standard financial concept which, when applied to charitable giving, suggests that using an endowment to finance investments sooner rather than later offers significant social returns. In other words, high inflation and rising costs can erode the 'value' of an endowment – what the money can actually buy over time.

4 To focus attention

Limiting the lifespan of a trust or foundation requires Trustees and staff to focus with extra vigour on what is to be achieved within that period. Another factor is that by focusing resources on only a few targeted sectors, a trust or foundation may be able to make a significant contribution to under-served areas and bring public attention to those subjects.

5 To avoid creating an ongoing bureaucracy

Some argue that the management of perpetual trusts or foundations with endowments producing annual income for disbursement can require a large administrative bureaucracy, and that supporting this may not be the best use of the trust or foundation's funds.

6 To avoid the possibility that the purpose will become obsolete or obscured

The purpose and goals of any trust or foundation could become obsolete over the years and a time limit could help prevent this. In a family trust or foundation, the expanding family may have charitable goals that differ from or are in conflict with the donor's original intent.

7 To fulfil the wishes of the founder(s)

A growing number of founders are specifying that their trust or foundation must spend all assets within a limited time. This approach can also ensure that funds are managed by Trustees the founder(s) knew and trusted and are directed to causes the founder supported.

8 To allow the founder(s) to participate in decision-making

The 'giving while living' approach allows wealthy individuals to engage in philanthropy today and see the fruits of their efforts within their own lifetimes. The idea is not new. In 1889, Andrew Carnegie, the industrialist and philanthropist, suggested: *"The man who dies... rich, dies disgraced."*

9 To set an example to others

Modelling to others about where and how one might give can be very important. Many parents involve their children in their charitable plans, using philanthropy as a tool to teach them how to manage family wealth as well as to instil values such as generosity.

10 To enjoy giving

Many philanthropists say they enjoy the personal involvement and motivation that comes from the focus of setting objectives to be achieved within a set timeframe.

The practicalities

Management

As a spend out organisation, schedules, investment management, budgets, cash flows, contracts and service agreements all became more complex, critical and time-sensitive the closer we got to our final closure date. Logistically, we had to give these important 'details' the time and attention they deserved without letting them squeeze the agenda, leaving no time to think about the 'big' issues. We tackled this through a combination of prioritisation, delegation, elimination and extra effort.

Early on, we set up an effective and empowered Finance and Investment Committee involving two Trustees and our excellent finance and administration staff. In our spend out phase we created two further subcommittees made up of Trustees and staff. The first we called the Legacy Review Team, the second, the Spend Out Team. The remit of the former was to conduct preliminary discussions with and due diligence on prospective beneficiaries. The latter kept track of and made specific recommendations on a range of technical and logistical matters related to spend out, from leases to merger partners. Our regular monthly conference calls were now used to cover anything to do with administration or governance, leaving the few remaining trustee meetings generally free for discussion with staff and Trustees from other organisations, and for considering major grants and strategic issues.

Lessons learned

- **Ensure that a rigorous and effective mechanism is in place to focus on details of closure.**
- **Plan and prioritise, and don't lose sight of the big issues in dealing with the mountain of practical details.**

Investments, finances and scheduling

The financial affairs of many charities are complex. Income comes from a variety of sources, some of them uncertain or unreliable. With reserves often only sufficient to cover ongoing expenses for a few months, long-term survival depends on keeping a wary eye on cash flow. As a well resourced grant-maker we made scrupulous financial forecasts but were relieved of many of the financial pressures other charities face. As we approached spend out, however, we recognised the need for more detailed reporting and more frequent review of finances. At the beginning of trustee meetings we reviewed the spreadsheets and then looked at them again at the end of the meeting to see the impact of the funding decisions we had just taken.

Similarly, we were moderate financial risk-takers and had a relatively long-term investment horizon in the early days. But when equity markets first looked shaky in early 2008, knowing we were not far from the end of our spend out, we withdrew completely from the stock market in order to enable us to know with some certainty the scale of the funds we had to spend. This turned out to be an excellently-timed investment decision, but was more driven by our spend out policy than by any prescience about stock market movements! Thereafter we drew up a detailed timeline anticipating all major grants; on the back of this we did a three-year forecast which was amended at least quarterly. Any bonds or deposits were timed to mature in line with our budget and these too were reviewed each time we met to making funding decisions.

Planning the timetable became something of an obsession. Working backwards from the expected closure date, we determined exactly how many trustee meetings remained and how many grant decisions we could and needed to make at each of those meetings. We were very aware of two risks: that we could lose confidence in one of our preferred organisations, leaving us with too little time to find an alternative organisation to invest in; or that we would not get all the information we required in time to make responsible decisions before closing down.

To avoid a build-up of hurried and last-minute decision-making, we were very clear about deadlines for submissions of proposals and feedback reports. Where we felt we knew enough about an organisation and its potential already, we looked to simplify the review process. We were conscious that at times we forced the pace, sometimes to the alarm of potential recipients. As it turned out, the fact that we already knew a great deal about the largest of the organisations we had chosen to work with reduced the risks significantly.

Lessons learned

- **Spending out i.e. 'getting to zero' requires meticulous planning and constant scrutiny.**
- **Getting to know your grantees over an extended period of time can help you 'let go'.**

Communication – inside and out

A major concern regarding our spend out was to communicate exactly what was happening and why to the outside world. This entailed both 'behind the scenes' informal conversations with our partners and then the publication of a very carefully thought-through statement on our website. We dealt with expressions of confusion or frustration sympathetically and as flexibly as possible. But in the interests of fairness and to avoid wasted energies, we had clear rules and deadlines for moving from one set of grant-making guidelines to another. Our success in making the transition widely known and accepted was entirely due to very careful planning.

Once the time horizon for closing was established, our greatest concern was to make sure our own staff were not destabilised. They had important knowledge and relationships that could not easily be replaced.

The Trustees felt great loyalty to the staff and this sentiment was, we felt, reciprocated. Nevertheless, we constantly reminded each other and the staff that our primary loyalty was to the Trust and its aims.

It would have been understandable if anyone had decided to leave before closedown, but we depended crucially on key people remaining in place and motivated during our final stressful phase. We spoke to staff openly about our initial inability to give either a precise end date or specific details of their redundancy packages. But with good professional advice and invaluable input from other charities that were going through a spend out phase of their own, by May 2010 – two years before the anticipated closure date – we were able to give staff estimates of the final date, the likely notice period, and the kind of termination package they could expect.

It was difficult to gauge what incentives we could justifiably offer to minimise the risk of a highly disruptive staff departure, given the relatively small number of employees we had and the relatively large amounts of money – over £20 million – we were awarding in grants in the last two years. However, we sought independent advice from both human resources and legal experts about the scale and conditions of severance agreements.

We put redundancy plans in place and arranged bonus schemes to retain and reward individuals for the achievement of their final set of objectives.

The trickiest part of negotiations with staff was eventually agreeing the timeframe for departure, which depended in each case on having achieved very specific personal objectives. We understood that no-one wanted to be sitting at their desks with nothing to do, but we also knew that the greatest risk to our spend out plans would be not having the labour or knowledge to complete our work, especially once we had agreed and announced a specific date for closure. Although we engaged in formal consultation with staff to try to manage this situation, at the end of the day we relied – justifiably as it turned out – on strong interpersonal relationships and professional integrity to keep the team together.

It was the implicit rather than the explicit contract that kept the show on the road: everyone agreed on the rationale for spend out, which we saw as an exceptional opportunity, and we each felt personally and collectively responsible for seeing it through to the end. Indeed, when asked, most of our staff saw this as a once-in-a-lifetime chance to have a profound and lasting impact on issues they understood and cared about deeply.

Lessons learned

- **Plan all communications; their content and timing are crucial.**
- **Be open and transparent with staff.**
- **Take professional advice if necessary.**
- **Be clear about timescales and redundancy packages as soon as you are able.**
- **Keep the entire team together as long as you can; piecemeal redundancies can be very demoralising.**

Transfer of assets

Our final big concern was that it would be impractical, too drawn out and too expensive to attempt to tie up all the loose ends to the best of our ability and then shut up shop. We felt we needed some residual organisation to deal with unforeseen queries or liabilities. Our Spend Out Team, which included our two lawyers, identified three options:

a. Gradual wind-up with an accounting firm providing support;

b. Gradual wind-up with a specialist legal firm providing support;

c. 'Merge' with another charity in order to allow the transfer of any residual Tubney liabilities and assets.

After numerous discussions it became clear that the third option was by far the most desirable from Tubney's point of view as it combined knowledge of our sectors with a clean exit. A drawn-out closure period, simply waiting for any unforeseen financial liability or legal claim to emerge, meant keeping a skeleton crew in place until the filing of final accounts. This seemed wasteful.

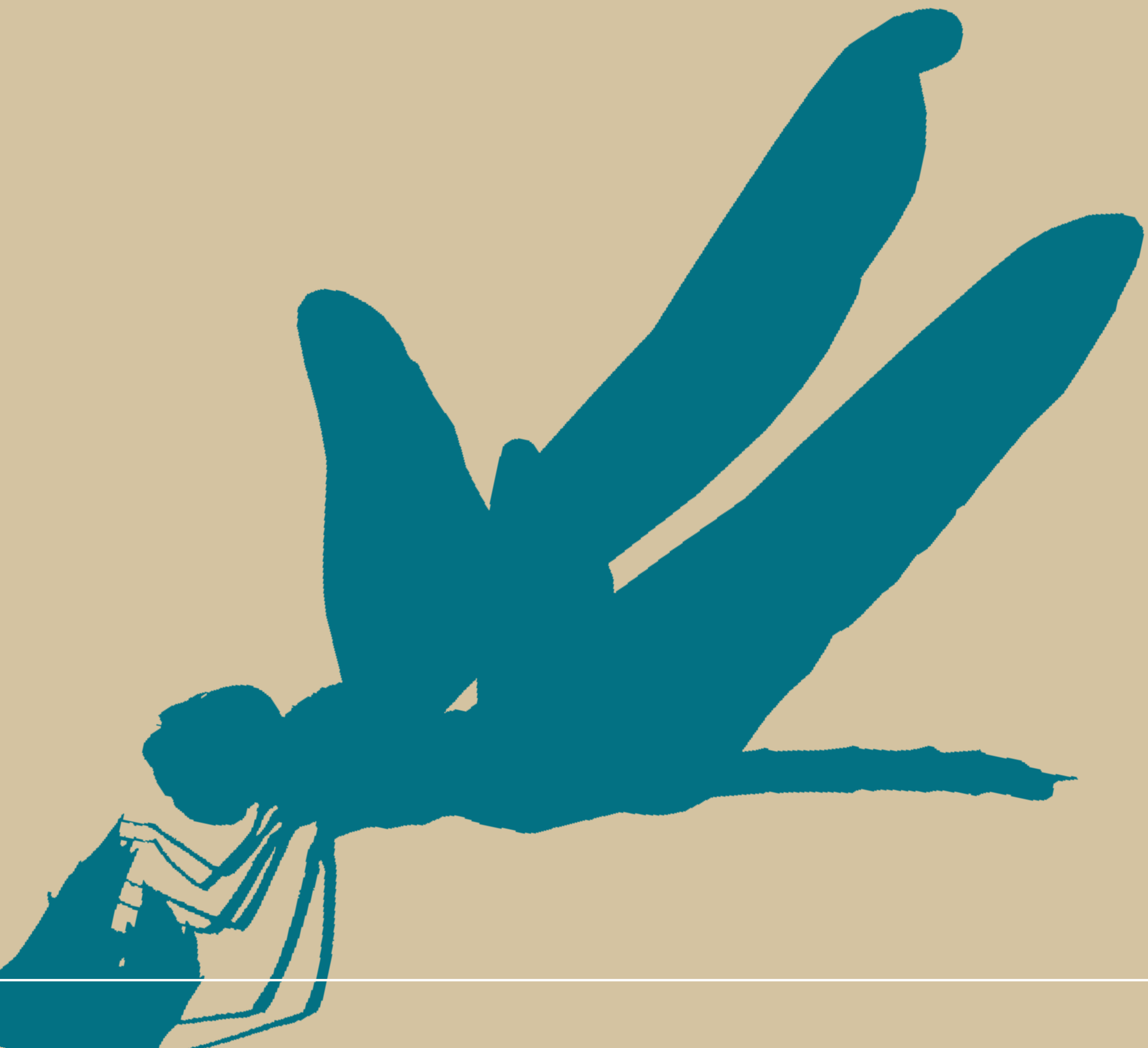
Unfortunately, it was not so clear why another charity would want to oblige us. We looked among our partner organisations, who might be sympathetic and knew we ran a tidy ship. Clearly, we didn't want to put potential legacy grant recipients under pressure to accommodate us. We identified an ideal candidate, and then waited until we had completed our legacy grant-making before we broached the idea of it becoming our transfer partner. We were careful to avoid a conflict of interest, or to imply that any grant under consideration was conditional on them becoming our transfer partner. In the end, thankfully, it was happy to agree to take on the role.

Once we had an agreement in principle, it still took some time to sort through the details. What exactly would the transfer organisation be taking over from us? Clearly, it needed to be assured that it would not be open to unexpected third-party claims, such as unpaid bills. But there was the larger question of responsibility for the literally hundreds of grant agreements that Tubney had signed over the years.

The process of formally transferring these contracts to our legacy partner was daunting and in the end everyone agreed that this was impractical; instead they were all either formally terminated or the (hopefully academic) right to reclaim misspent funds or claims arising on insolvency remained with a moribund Tubney.

Lessons learned

- **Consider how best to deal with residual assets and liabilities; an existing partner may be willing to take them on.**
- **Start thinking early about how any outstanding issues will be dealt with after your closure date.**



Summary

What an exciting and fulfilling journey it has been! We hope and believe that our founders would approve of our actions, since our knowledge of them and their views informed us at every step.

Although the Trust has existed for a remarkably short time, it has played a very important part in the lives of its Trustees and staff. It was always a team effort, but we enjoyed enormous freedom of action. In giving us such freedom and, consequently, such responsibility, we naturally think our donors were extremely far-sighted. We were able to determine our own mission, objectives and timetable. We made many mistakes but we tried to learn from those mistakes and correct them where we could. We went back to the strategic drawing board on more than one occasion. Each time we emerged with a modified or refined mission and priorities. In business-speak terms, each time we 'owned' the new organisation and strategy.

In our grant-making we became increasingly focused over time and this allowed us to develop profound subject knowledge and relationships. As our understanding of the issues we were confronting increased, so did our awareness of the social, economic and political context in which those issues needed to be addressed. And as our remit and goals changed, so did our approach to business planning, grant applications and feedback; the more speculative and long-term our grants became, the more thoughtful we had to be about how we would measure 'success'. For us, 'adding value' was only partly about funding. It was a means to an end, but it wasn't the only means.

Once we had discovered our strengths as an organisation, we naturally tried to play to them. We actively sought out projects and other organisations that would benefit most from engagement with us. We strove to improve the quality and effectiveness of every project and every organisation we supported.

At times we may have come across to applicants as 'meddlers' and 'back seat drivers', but in the end, especially as we became more adept at knowing where and how to intrude our views, we believe that most of our partners came to appreciate our deep interest and enthusiasm for what they were doing. In the process, we learned to accept the inevitability of risk and uncertainty.

Because of our commitment from the outset to 'spending out', we were acutely aware that our role, both financially and otherwise, was transitory. This brought us eventually to the realisation that our most important goal should be to build up the capacity of the organisations that would outlive us and to strengthen the networks and collaborations between those organisations.
We hope that most of our partner organisations feel they are in a better place – organisationally, strategically and financially – than they would have been had Tubney never existed. We also wanted to ensure that the very many lessons, some of them painful ones, that we learned along the way were passed on.
In this spirit we offer this brief account of our experiences during the short but mostly happy life of The Tubney Charitable Trust.

Tubney House, the former home of Miles and Briony Blackwell, was donated by the Trust to Oxford University to serve as the base for WildCRU, the University's internationally-renowned Wildlife Conservation Research Unit.

Trustees and friends at Tubney House

Acknowledgements

Each of the following played a key role in the Tubney story. If anyone has been inadvertently missed off the list, we hope they will accept our apologies for the oversight and unintended omission.

Founders and benefactors

Miles and Briony Blackwell

Trustees

Jonathan Burchfield (Chairman, 2002-2008)

Terry Collins

Jim Kennedy

René Olivieri (Chair, 2008-2012)

Staff

Nick Forster – Programme Director – Environment

Anil Patil – Programme Officer – Farmed Animal Welfare

Sarah Ridley – Executive Director

Angie Seal – Grants Manager

Claire Tyrrell – Administration and Finance Manager

James Webb – Team Administrator

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Independent Financial Adviser

Optimum Support for Charities, 90 Long Acre, Covent Garden, London, WC2E 9RZ

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Anne, Julius and Luisa Lutke
Astrid Bonfield
BCM Group
Ben Cattermoul
Benet Northcote
Bob Waller
Buzzacott Giving Solutions
Bryan Seal
Carol Mack
Catherine Small
Chani and Chris at Chan Cham
Christine Nicol
Christopher Stopes
Colin Bridges
Colin Spedding
Conor Jameson
Co-operative Systems
Danyal Sattar
David and Joan Petchey
David Carrington
David Clark
David Emerson

David Macdonald
David Main
David Smellie
Dawn Austwick
Diana Leat
Diane Courtney
Dick Sibley
Drew Benelick
Eddie Finch
Eileen Rayner
Enid Ruddock
Environmental Funders Network
Felix Gummer
Fiona Dauppe
Graham Clow
Graham Wynne
Helen Browning
Ian Burgess
Jacquie Kennedy
Jane Burchfield
Janet Sharp
Jenny Dadd
Jeremy Biggs
Joan Edwards
Jock Campbell
John and Jane Marie Zelenik
Jon Cracknell
Joyce D'Silva
Judith McNeill
Julia Wrathall
Julian Smith
Laura McCaffrey
Leigh Grant
Lesley Lambert
Louise Postle
Lucas Fettes
Margaret Perrott
Marian Dawkins
Mark Cooper
Mark Rabet
Mark Smith
Mark Watts
Martin Price
Matt Shardlow
Michael Allen
Michael Petchey
Mike Baker
Mike Hudson
Natalie Griffiths
Natasha Barker Bradshaw
Nick Perks
Nigel Wale
Olivia Forster
Paul Grice
Paul Ridout
Penny Fox
Peter Bradnock
Philip Knight
Philip Lymbery
Philip Wilkinson
Pippa Vincent
Ray Selby
Richard Brooks
Richard Graham
RG Services
Rob Wilkinson
Robert Boddington
Robert Kirtland
Roger Hancock
Roland Bonney
Ruth Layton
Ruth, Asha and Maya Patil
Sam Fanshawe
Sandra Edwards
Sharon Walker
Simon Robinson
Stella Tang
Stephanie Hilborne
Stephanie Wankling
Stephen Pittam
Sue Holden
Theresa Lloyd
Tim O'Brien
Tom Shebbeare
Total Coverage
Tris Lewis
Victoria Chester
Zoë Bunter

Tubney-funded publications

The Trust has funded work in pursuit of its objectives to support organisations and activities that deliver a long-term impact in the following two areas:

- Conservation of the natural environment of the United Kingdom;
- Improvement of the welfare of farmed animals both in the UK and internationally.

Reports that have resulted from our funding are listed below and are available from **www.tubney.org.uk/publications.html**

Responding to the threats to UK marine biodiversity

The Trust and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation jointly commissioned a review of current and impending threats to the marine environment in UK waters to inform their grant-making in this area. IMM Ltd was selected to undertake this work and reported to the funders in January 2009. The Trustees of the two organisations considered the findings of the report and how their funding should be directed to most effectively meet their grant-making objectives.

The socio-economic impacts of fisheries management and policy designed to achieve biodiversity conservation

The Trust commissioned this report as part of a review as to how it might best support more effective use of socio-economic data by NGOs working to achieve biodiversity gains in UK waters. The report is a basic review of current knowledge of the socio-economic impacts of fisheries management and policy designed to achieve biodiversity conservation. It covers the mechanisms of fisheries management and policy, the importance and diversity of socio-economic knowledge, and how it can help to place fisheries into the broader, more holistic, framework of sustainable development.

This work led to a further, internal report, which the Trustees used to inform their grant-making in this area.

Farming tomorrow: Farmed Animal Welfare Forum 10-Year Strategic Plan

The Trust facilitated the creation of the Farmed Animal Welfare Forum, an informal forum consisting of influential farmed animal welfare organisations, scientists concerned with improving farmed animal welfare, and representatives of the food industry and certifying bodies.

The Forum developed a working document for a co-ordinated 10-year strategic plan to effect large-scale, long-term and sustainable improvements in the welfare of farmed animals.

Encouraging philanthropic support to improve the welfare of farmed animals

The Trust commissioned EcoS Consultancy Ltd to carry out a prospect research and feasibility study for encouraging philanthropic support for activities that improve the welfare of farmed animals. EcoS was also asked to explore how the Farmed Animal Welfare Forum's 10-year strategic plan (as above) was likely to be viewed by potential funders.

Spending out

As a 'spend out' charity, The Tubney Charitable Trust had a limited life and spent all its income and capital to achieve its objectives. We supported the dissemination of two publications on spending out. The guides aim to address the key issues and questions relating to spend out and to provide a structure for discussion/decision-making.

Spending out: learning lessons from time-limited grant-making, **Association of Charitable Foundations**
www.acf.org.uk

The power of now: spend out trusts and foundations in the UK, **Institute for Philanthropy**
www.instituteforphilanthropy.org

History of the Trust

Timeline

1997

- The Tubney Charitable Trust was registered at the Charity Commission
- Briony Blackwell and Jonathan Burchfield were the original Trustees
- The charity was administered out of Jim Kennedy's law firm's office in Winchester
- Grant-making commenced

2001

- The founders died unexpectedly

2002

- Three additional Trustees started work in earnest – Terry Collins, Jim Kennedy and René Olivieri
- Jonathan Burchfield took on the role of Chairman and the charity was administered out of his law firm's office in Reading

2003

- Sarah Ridley joined the Trust as its first permanent staff member
- A thorough strategic review was undertaken and the Trustees decided to focus on two programme areas:
  - Conservation of the Natural Environment in the UK
  - Improving the Welfare of Farmed Animal in the UK and internationally

2004

- Three professional staff members joined the Trust – Nick Forster, Angie Seal and Claire Tyrrell
- The Charity opened its own office in Reading
- The Trust revised its guidelines

2007

- Two further staff members joined the Trust: Anil Patil and James Webb

2008

- René Olivieri took over the role of Chair
- Following another strategic review, the Trust shifted its grant-making practices from reacting to applicants' requests for project funding to proactively selecting organisations to receive capacity building grants

2011

- All grants were agreed and funds disbursed

2012

- The Trust's minimal remaining assets were transferred to a residual beneficiary and the office of The Tubney Charitable Trust was formally closed.

This short book recounts the evolution of The Tubney Charitable Trust and the various challenges it faced over time. Against this background it explores issues of interest to all grant-makers: strategic planning, governance, campaigning, risk management, project management, partnerships and financial management. It will be of particular interest to grant-makers like Tubney who have committed to, or are contemplating, spending out.

www.tubney.org.uk

Charity Number 1061480

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