

Seal Protection Action Group

Scottish Charity No. SC017447

Accounts

**For the year ended 31 October
2025**

Seal Protection Action Group

Scottish Charity No. SC017447

Trustees Report: year ended 31st October 2025

Current Trustees:

Mr Andrew Ottaway - Chair
Ms Samantha Dawes
Mr Brian Garman
Lee Watson

Main contact address: PO Box 191, Newhaven, East Sussex

Recruitment and appointment and Trustees:

This can be done at any point during the year by a member proposing a new Trustee, being seconded, and all members then voting on the appointment. Mr Lee Watson, of Ythan Seal Watch, has been nominated and appointed as a new Trustee of the charity.

Governing document

The Group is a charitable unincorporated association.

Charitable purposes

The objects of the Group as set out in the constitution are:

- a) To protect and conserve by effective means the seal population so that the education of the public can be advanced through the study of seals in their natural habitat and their relationship with the marine littoral environment;
- b) To promote humane behaviour towards animals, particularly but not exclusively marine animals, which are in need of care and attention by reason of sickness, maltreatment, poor circumstances or ill-usage

Activities:

Seal shooting campaign

Following our long campaign, and with the threat of a US import embargo on fisheries products that would include Scottish Salmon products from 2022, all deliberate killing of seals was banned in Scotland in February 2021. The ban was further adopted by the UK Government in March 2021, a truly historic victory for the UK's globally important grey and common seal populations. The US ban will have conservation benefits for all seal populations worldwide. We will continue to monitor the situation to ensure that our seals are protected from deliberate killing.

During 2024/5, we have highlighted other serious threats to seals, such as disturbance, over-fishing, pollution, entanglement in fishing gears and marine rubbish, including plastics that are killing huge numbers of seals and other marine and bird life each year. The charity is continuing to work through the Pinniped Entanglement Group and Seal Alliance exploring new methods to capture, treat and release seals entangled in discarded fishing gear and other plastic debris.

SPAG's Mobile Seal Rescue Unit (MSRU) – Report for April 2023 - March 2025

Our MSRU has been dealing with casualties from Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk, when there is no local rehabilitation space available. We are increasingly concerned that some seals are put down because they cannot be taken anywhere for treatment. We have decided to fund a new permanent unit in this area and a report on progress can be found below.

Suffolk Seal Rescue Unit (SSRU)

In March 25, SPAG donated £25,000 to British Divers Marine Life Rescue in order to build a permanent Seal Rescue facility near Felixstowe. In August, the new Unit was ready to receive rescued seals for assessment and treatment.

Suffolk Seal Rescue Unit Report Summary (August 2025 – March 2026)

This summary highlights the SSRU's achievements, operational improvements, and the positive impact of the new facility on seal rescue and rehabilitation efforts.

- The MSRU was retired in April 2025, and the new, larger Suffolk Seal Rescue Unit (SSRU) became operational on August 2nd, 2025.
- The new facility offers more space, better equipment, and access to mains utilities, improving care and operations.
- The SSRU began operations immediately, with the first rescued pup, *Laika*, arriving just days after opening.
- Throughout the period, the unit cared for 28 seal pups (both common and grey seals) over 94 days. The longest stay was 14 days for a pup named *Marshmallow*.
- The new unit allows for improved enrichment, upgraded equipment (including heat mats and air conditioning), and better storage and preparation of food for the pups.
- The team managed to care for up to four pups at once, which was challenging but rewarding, especially seeing longstay pups progress through rehabilitation and eventual release.
- The SSRU was not operational from April to August 2025, resulting in a shorter rescue season and missing the start of the common seal season and late grey pups.
- Volunteer training increased, with support from Cornwall Seal Hospital, resulting in a new Lead Medic and more volunteers advancing in their training.
- Public engagement improved, leading to more direct calls to the rescue hotline and greater awareness of the charity's work.
- The Orford Ness grey seal colony saw significant growth, with 430 pups and 803 adults reported—a rise of 88% from the previous year.

This summary highlights the SSRU's achievements, operational improvements, and the positive impact of the new facility on seal rescue and rehabilitation efforts.

2024/5 season: Cornwall Seal Hospital

Thanks to a major contribution from SPAG (£20,000), the Cornwall Seal Hospital (CSH) was officially opened in September 2021. SPAG is very proud to have provided the funds to make this project a reality. The facility is strictly treatment only, and no public visits are permitted, to ensure that seals can recover without disturbance.

During the 2024-2025 grey seal pup season the CSH admitted 78 grey seal pups. Despite admissions being significantly lower, a large proportion of pups were suffering from severe

illness, rather than being injured or malnourished, and these pups died from their conditions. We suspect the high proportion of diseased pups is most likely related to the overall lower number of admissions. This may be a result of better weather conditions, meaning more pups prospered and did not require rescue interventions. Unfortunately though, those that did need help were in very poor condition and unlikely to survive.

Plans are underway to develop the CSH site into a full rehabilitation centre. The potential to build pools and supporting infrastructure is being explored. Additional pool capacity in Cornwall would allow more seals to be rehabilitated and relieve pressure on other facilities.

Through our new Seal Rescue Unit in Suffolk, and the Seal Hospital in Cornwall, the charity has continued to support seal rescue and rehabilitation on a significant scale. We are very proud that our support is helping so many sick and injured pups to recover and be returned safely to the wild.

Seal Alliance Coalition work

‘Do not disturb our seals’

Our Seal Alliance network is helping protect seals in Scotland, the UK and worldwide. Throughout 2024 and 2025, the Seal Alliance continued to promote our ‘Do not disturb’ campaign throughout the UK and Scotland. monitoring and reporting serious seal disturbance issues, SPAG also sponsored **Seal Rangers** to promote seal protection locally and nationally, raising awareness of the threats seal’s face. The campaign is gaining ground and we are working to have seals protected under the UK’s Wildlife & Countryside Act in order to make deliberate disturbance a wildlife crime as it is for whales and dolphins. Disappointingly, the UK Government is resisting our call for seal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act so the public campaign is being stepped up to garner more political support. Details can be found at: www.sealalliance.org

Flying Rings’

In 2024, the Seal Alliance launched a national campaign to end the sale of plastic flying ring toys. These toys are a menace to seals as they get stuck around their necks when playing with them. These rings then cut deeply into the seal’s neck as it grows, causing gaping wounds and a slow death from strangulation. This year (2025) a national petition and public awareness campaign is underway to ban the import and sale of these lethal toys. Details can be found at: www.sealalliance.org

Protecting seals worldwide

SPAG continues to monitor seal hunting and the markets for seal products around the world. Commercial killing and trade in seal products has fallen sharply, due to an EU ban on commercial seal products that SPAG helped secure. Meanwhile, through our high profile campaign against seal shooting in Scotland and the rest of the UK, the threat of a US fisheries product trade embargo came into force in 2022. This has ensured that a huge decline in the deliberate killing of seals around the world will continue. Our capacity for this work is developing through the *Seal Alliance* coalition we founded, focusing on the many major threats to seals worldwide.

Trustee remuneration and expenses

All trustees are unpaid volunteers. Expenses are reimbursed and included in the annual accounts

Reserves

Unrestricted funds of £107,621 were held at the year end.

Accounts – attached.

These are for the period 1 November 2024 to 31 October 2025. These were independently examined by Caroline Clarke, Clarke + Wells, 66 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, and BN7 1XG. Tel 01273 961334

Approved by other Trustees and signed on their behalf

A. OttawayA handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Ottaway". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and slightly larger than the rest of the letters.**Chairman**

12th June 2026

Independent Examiners Report to The Trustees of Seal Protection Action Group

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 October 2025, which are set out on pages 6 and 7.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The Charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. The charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of regulation 10(1) (d) of the 2006 Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1) (c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeks explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiners statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations, and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations;have not been met, or:
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Caroline Clarke ACA
66 High Street Lewes
East Sussex BN7 1XG
15 July 2026

Seal Protection Action Group

Receipts and Payments Account For The Year Ended 31 October 2025

	2025	2024
Receipts		
Legacies and Donations	20,300	301
Bank interest	1,599	1,578
	<u>21,899</u>	<u>1,879</u>
Payments		
Telephone	854	845
Stationery and computer costs	371	353
Bank charges	64	-
Accountancy	312	168
Donations	75,000	-
	<u>76,601</u>	<u>1,366</u>
Net (payments)/receipts	<u><u>(54,702)</u></u>	<u><u>512</u></u>

Seal Protection Action Group

Statement of Balances For The Year Ended 31 October 2025

	2025	2024
Bank balances		
Opening balances	162,322	161,810
(Deficit)/Surplus	(54,702)	512
Closing balances	<u><u>107,620</u></u>	<u><u>162,322</u></u>
Assets		
Freehold Property		
Computer equipment	1,000	1,000
	<u><u>1,000</u></u>	<u><u>1,000</u></u>
Liabilities		
Accruals	240	240
	<u><u>240</u></u>	<u><u>240</u></u>

All funds are unrestricted

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf

A Ollaway, Chairperson

15 July 2026