



2008 Zoo Review

Annual Report of the North of England Zoological Society
for the year ended 31 December 2008



OUR VISION

A diverse, thriving and sustainable natural world

OUR MISSION

To be a major force in conserving biodiversity worldwide



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Chairman's statement

Tony Williams, Chairman, North of England Zoological Society

The economic downturn has naturally been a major challenge for the Society and its Chester Zoo operation in 2008 and will no doubt continue to be so into 2009. Our financial security is largely dependent on paid-for visits to the Zoo. This income is vital in terms of supporting our ever-expanding programmes in conservation, animal welfare, education and science at home and abroad and in ensuring that we remain an attractive and viable visitor destination. Naturally, in the face of a global recession and in line with other businesses, we acted swiftly to retain visitation and encourage repeat visits. We worked extremely hard to cut costs and to maintain positive growth and development for both business and mission. Importantly, we acted to maintain security of employment for our staff and provide even better facilities for the animals in our care. For all of these reasons, the 2008 Annual Report has been produced in an 'economical format' to reduce cost. Nonetheless, we believe that our members and supporters will find it just as informative as in previous years!

With an all-time record number of over 1.37 million visitors during the year, we have had an ideal opportunity to convey our conservation message and influence public opinion on the need to live sustainably and safeguard endangered species for future generations (see Director General's Report). In the face of the current severe recession and for the first time since the 1992 recession, the Society suffered a consolidated deficit of £200,000 (before actuarial losses on the pension scheme) on a turnover of £22.4 million (see Group statement of financial activities, p.44). This contrasts with an operating surplus in 2007 of £781,000. The principal underlying factors in arriving at a deficit in 2008 were: a 27% increase in utility costs and a 16% increase in animal food costs (both of which spiralling costs were essentially outside of the Zoo's control). In addition, although secondary trading income certainly benefited from the additional visitors, the overall spend per head has been showing a steady decline during the year as our visitors became more cautious in the way they spend their available free income. Also, to pursue our Natural Vision expansion programme we invested a total of £894,000 in planning costs, half of which was match-funded by the North West Development Agency. This will enable us to develop this new and exciting project to the next stage to secure planning permission.

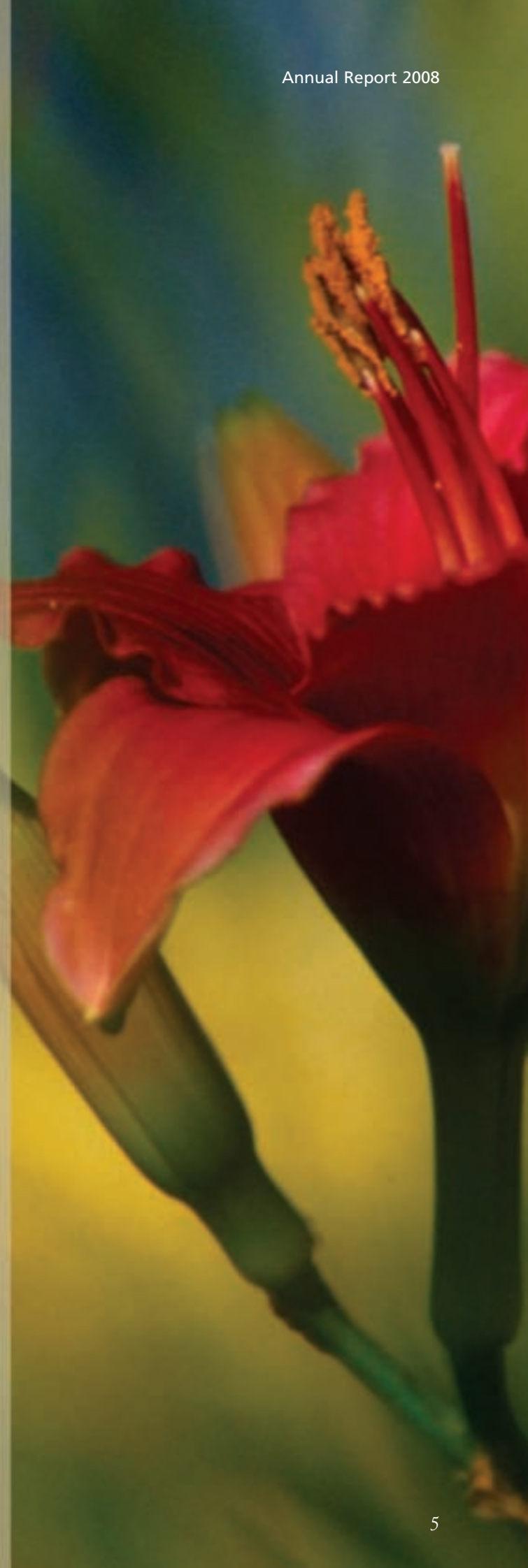
In response to the foregoing situation, we instigated and have sustained a rigorous cost reduction exercise. Although this was not achieved without considerable difficulty, we expect 2009 costs to be held below 2008 levels with no detriment to animal welfare or deleterious impact on the Society's mission or guest

services. Early indications in 2009 are that we will maintain our visitor numbers and essential savings, while substantially increasing income. Accordingly, a return to a healthy surplus is expected in 2009. In striving to achieve all of this, we are more than ever dependent on our members, visitors and external stakeholders. In this endeavour we remain fortunate to have the continued support of our President His Grace, the Duke of Westminster KG, CB, OBE, TD, DL, and our Vice Presidents, the Right Honourable Lord Wade of Chorlton and the Honourable Mrs Margaret Jane Heber-Percy.

Despite the current economic 'doom and gloom' much positive progress has been achieved in the Zoo, notably through our Capital Projects Programme which provides a greatly enhanced guest experience and much-needed all-weather provision. This year saw the opening of a new bridge complex across the canal and Flag Lane which gives visitors charming leafy views and a shorter route between the Twilight Zone and the Asiatic Lion enclosure. It also gives visitors an aerial perspective of the new Cheetah enclosure; where we welcome back a group of rare Cheetahs after a number of years absence and with the intention of establishing a managed breeding programme. Other notable new exhibits were for the critically endangered Philippine Crocodiles and the new walk-through 'Butterfly Journey' to be completed and formally opened in 2009.

At this year's Annual General Meeting, we bade a fond farewell to two of our Trustees, Dr Judith Skerritt and Dr Jeremy Playfer. On behalf of the Society I would like to thank them for their unstinting support and contribution during their term of office. Two of our other Trustees gained recognition for their work in Conservation and Education. Chris Mahon became Chairman of the UK chapter of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Professor Malcolm Bennett was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Liverpool (part of which is based near the Zoo at Leahurst Veterinary Hospital). He was also elected President of the Association of Veterinary Teachers and Research Workers for 2008-09. Congratulations, also, to the Director General, Gordon McGregor Reid, who gained an Honorary Doctor of Science degree and medal from Manchester Metropolitan University in recognition of work in zoological conservation, education and research.

The coming year promises to be a difficult one, as the effect of the global financial crisis continues to put ever-more pressure on our ability to maintain our income and control our costs. The Society's Trustees, management and staff have responded with innovation, enthusiasm and alacrity! Their tremendous dedication and commitment to our mission provides the bedrock of the Society's success. I would like to express my warmest thanks to them for their efforts in helping us to pursue our mission to be a major force in conserving biodiversity worldwide.





The Chairman's Statement has highlighted the economic challenges through 2008 leading to 2009. Happily, some figures published in late 2008 gave us grounds for cautious optimism regarding a positive outlook for the visitor economy as a whole and for Chester Zoo in particular. Our 2008 visitor numbers on the 'traditional count' (excluding non-paying infants) were close to 1.3 million, an improvement of more than 2% on 2007. We reached an all-time record total of 1,373,459 when the figures include the 'twos and under' and people attending zoo conferences and special events. As ever, the high performance of the Zoo has resulted in a clutch of international, national and regional awards and commendations, including in the areas of horticulture, education, research, marketing, animal welfare and field conservation (page 16). This brings our cumulative total to a remarkable 210!

Throughout 2008, the Society has continued to build on its national and international reputation. Our Conservation and Education Directorate gained formal awards and commendations for a number of the Zoo's conservation, education, research and outreach projects (page 10). Our staff expertise is much sought after and they play a leading role in over 20 national projects and 60 international projects in 21 countries throughout the world. In addition, our horticultural and botanical team, who are responsible for all the landscaping within the Zoo, have again demonstrated their strength and creativity by gaining a prestigious Silver Gilt Medal for their 'Butterfly Garden' at the Royal Horticultural Society Show in July 2008. In October, the Society gained both the 'North West in Bloom Award 2008 - Best Large Tourist Attraction' and also the 'Chester in Bloom Award 2008 – Best Tourist Attraction Award'.

Director General's review

Professor Gordon McGregor Reid, Director General,
North of England Zoological Society

Physical Development

Our ambitious plans for 'Natural Vision' continued in earnest throughout 2008, with a series of workshops held with senior management, Trustees and local and regional stakeholders. The entire project was encapsulated in a document entitled "Natural Vision at Chester Zoo" published in February 2008. This represented the vision and concept for this exciting development and was the starting point for the master-planners as they commenced work in mid-April 2008. An Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) open tender procurement route was used to select a number of consultants to guide the Society through the substantial complexities of project planning, business case development, project management and cost management. A grant funding agreement was signed between the Society and the North West Development Agency (NWDA) to secure funding for the planning phase of the project. The NWDA Project Review Group and Tourism sub-committee approved the Masterplan, which released funding and enabled the Society to commence design work on Phase 1 of the project. The 'Natural Vision' plan features a magnificent centre-piece 'Heart of Africa' biodome, the concept development for which is progressing swiftly and well. A detailed planning application for this phase and outline planning application for subsequent phases are scheduled for submission in September 2009. A widespread public consultation took place throughout 2008 and is ongoing in 2009. We are grateful for the kind support of the Government Office North West, NWDA, Cheshire and Warrington Economic Alliance (CWEA), Visit Chester and Cheshire (VCC), Cheshire County Council, Upton Parish Council, local residents and many other key stakeholders. We are grateful to all of them for their support and encouragement with this major development.

In this connection, the Zoo has comfortably adjusted to new stakeholder relationships following local government re-organisation. We were delighted to welcome Steve Robinson on a tour of the Zoo, following his appointment as

Chief Executive of the newly established Cheshire West and Chester Authority. We were also pleased that he was able to participate in a meeting of the Visit Chester and Cheshire tourism consortium which includes the Zoo.

Early in 2008 we received welcome confirmation that the Oglesby Charitable Trust are keen to financially support a vital amphibian conservation project in Chester Zoo. This is a biosecure 'A-pod' for maintenance of critically endangered species and to study and treat life-threatening amphibian diseases. A generous donation covering three years, will contribute to saving vital components of the world's rapidly declining amphibian population. Our warm thanks go to Mr Michael Oglesby (who is High Sheriff of Greater Manchester) and to Mr David Briggs (High Sheriff of Cheshire until early 2008) who was instrumental in introducing Mr Oglesby to the conservation work of the Zoo. Indeed, Mr and Mrs Briggs themselves kindly contributed to the cost of the new Butterfly Journey exhibit via the Landfill Tax Credit grant monies received.

In addition to the several capital development projects highlighted in the Chairman's Statement, our 'Asian Plains' exhibit for the Greater One-horned Rhinoceros was successfully completed. This was opened in May 2008 by North American clothing entrepreneur Marc Ecko, the millionaire founder and Chief Creative Officer of Marc Ecko Enterprises. He has worked for many years to highlight the conservation plight of the Rhino and has contributed to youth and education initiatives globally. Marc is the first official adopter of the Zoo's rare and endangered Greater One-horned Rhinoceros and we gratefully acknowledge his support.

Local and Regional Activity

A key recurring theme for the year has been Chester Zoo support for Liverpool's European Capital of Culture 2008. This event has evidently attracted some 15 million people and created £800 million of economic impact which will benefit the whole region including Chester and Cheshire.

Often simply associated with animals, Chester Zoo is also an award-winning zoological garden. In this spirit we have strongly supported *Cheshire's Year of the Gardens 2008*, officially launched at Tatton Park in April and linked to the Liverpool Capital of Culture programme. It is calculated that an additional 300,000 people visited Cheshire as a result, generating up to £15m additional revenue during 2008. The 'Year of the Gardens' events were planned and developed by VCC with support from the NWDA, Cheshire County Council and the 'Gardens of Cheshire', including Chester Zoo. Having been the Chair of Gardens Strategy Group that originally proposed this initiative, it naturally became an important part of the Zoo's wider marketing and audience development plans for 2008.

On behalf of the Institute of Biology and Journal of Biological Education, I spoke at the *Association of Science Educators' Symposium on Biodiversity* organized by the University of Liverpool in January 2008. My presentation was entitled 'Conservation Education that Motivates' and focused on the impressive role of Chester Zoo in informing and educating the wider public. In the same month I gave the welcoming speech at the *5th European Zoo Nutrition Conference* which was hosted by Chester Zoo. Distinguished speakers included Professor Rob Marrs of the University of Liverpool and Harry Schram, Executive Chair of the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums (EAZA). I was also happy to introduce the *3rd Zoo Education Presenters' Conference* hosted and organised by Zoo staff in February.

I was particularly pleased that the Zoo was able to accommodate a photographic exhibit - *Hard Rain – our headlong collision with nature*. Set to the words of the song by Bob Dylan, this hard-hitting presentation by Mark Edwards opened in May and aims to encourage people to adopt sustainable lives and to raise awareness of issues of climate change, habitat loss, pollution and poverty. In June, I joined a regional partners' event in Manchester titled *State of the Natural Environment - Meeting the Challenge*. This was hosted by colleagues from Natural England, at which they presented their *State of the Natural Environment 2008* report and discussed how Natural England is responding to the serious issues that their report highlights. This was followed by a workshop on how best to co-operate regionally to meet the challenges set out in the report.

Among many other areas of mutual co-operation and benefit there has been strong stakeholder engagement with Reaseheath College, West Cheshire College, the University of Liverpool (and its Veterinary Faculty at Leahurst Hospital), Liverpool John Moore's University, Manchester Metropolitan University, Ness Botanical Gardens, Jodrell Bank, Warrington Borough Council, the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and the

Confederation of British Industry (CBI). I represented the Zoo at the CBI Annual Dinner in Manchester, which was addressed by the Right Honourable David Cameron MP as guest speaker. This provided an opportunity for dialogue with Liz Meek, Regional Director, Government Office for the North West, Felicity Goodey, Chair of Tourism for England's Northwest, and Keith Blundell, Head of Tourism at the Liverpool Culture Company. This year I was invited on to the University of Chester Business Advisory Council. Other board members include the CEO of Vauxhall Motors and senior management of the Countess of Chester Hospital, the NWDA, Chester Racecourse, Airbus UK and the University of Chester. The board's remit is to advise and assist the University in working productively with local enterprises, including Chester Zoo.

In December 2008, as a Business Ambassador for the Cheshire and Warrington Economic Alliance, I participated in a North West Development Agency (NWDA) reception at the House of Commons. This was hosted by North West MPs to celebrate the success of tourism in England's North West. This was a great opportunity to meet with key parliamentarians and tourism partners to discuss the regional economy and the Zoo's role as a high profile visitor attraction and significant contributor to the local and regional economy. We were also pleased to host visits from the new High Sheriff of Cheshire, Mr Nicholas Bromley-Davenport and our President His Grace the Duke of Westminster to explain our plans for the ambitious 'Natural Vision' development (page 14).

National Activity

The Zoo conservation and education team have been widely engaged around the planet fulfilling our mission to be a major force in conserving biodiversity worldwide (page 16). Naturally, charity begins at home and the team is active in many conservation and awareness-raising projects in the UK (page 23). I gave a presentation to the *All-Party Parliamentary Group Meeting, Westminster* in February organised by the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA). Mr Charles Walker MP, the Chair of the All-Party Group for Zoos, is helping to create awareness in government of various issues in wildlife tourism and biodiversity conservation, including the current frog extinction crisis. There was good media coverage for the event, which included MPs (not quite) kissing live frogs! (see 'Amphibian Ark' page 28). In April there was a poignant event, a *Celebration of the Life of Molly Badham MBE*. I attended, along with many other members of the British and international zoo communities, in order to commemorate the life and considerable achievements of the outstanding Molly Badham, former Director of Twycross Zoo.

In May I joined a BIAZA delegation to visit Professor Sir Drummond Bone in Liverpool to propose his appointment as BIAZA's first President. Sir Drummond kindly accepted our invitation, pending his retirement in July 2008 as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Liverpool. The appointment of Sir Drummond Bone as the first President of BIAZA is an important step forward, as he will be an active and engaging

leader, enabling the UK charity zoos to forge much closer links with government and the business sector. In further support of BIAZA, I gave a presentation on 'The Future for Zoo and Aquarium Research' for the *10th Annual BIAZA Research Symposium* hosted in July by The Deep (Aquarium) Hull in July. Finally, I was delighted and proud to see a Chester Zoo Orang utan featuring on a 2008 national postage stamp commemorating the life and work of Charles Darwin!

International Activity

Our conservation work involved 170 activities or projects in 50 countries and we produced more than 80 research publications and technical reports.

Dr Iary B Ravaoarimanana, Ambassador of Madagascar, visited in May and met with myself and other colleagues to discuss environmental projects and research relating to Madagascar. She was accompanied by Michael Green and Nick Mason (Trade Mission to the Embassy of Madagascar and Equitrade Chief Executive) and Brian Donaldson (former British Ambassador to Madagascar). Notable among many other important international meetings in the Zoo was a visit in July from Mauritian Wildlife Foundation Vice President, Tim Taylor and Conservation Director, Dr Carl Jones to discuss increased involvement of Chester Zoo in their biodiversity conservation projects and the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement on a collaborative partnership involving education, training, human development and ecotourism.

At the beginning of 2008 I stepped down as a Council Member of the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums (EAZA) and Chair of the EAZA Research Committee, a post I had held since 2002. My last act in this job was to deliver the *EAZA Research Strategy*, published in April 2008. In this task I had excellent support from a Europe-wide team of other collaborators and several Chester Zoo staff. The purpose of the *EAZA Research Strategy* is to help to further develop appropriate and excellent research and training within the European zoo and aquarium community and among its many partners. The strategy has already been distributed worldwide and translated into Russian, German and other languages. This is the first such strategy to be published and it aims to organise collaboration, planning and activity in zoos and aquariums, engaging with other like-minded stakeholders such as national and local governments, development agencies, universities, botanical gardens, genebanks, wildlife organisations and partners in the habitat countries.

In my capacity as President of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), I was kindly invited to give opening addresses and otherwise participate in several international conferences. The Central Zoo Authority (CZA) of India asked me to meet with the Honourable Minister for Environment and Forests and to lead in talks and workshops at their *International Conference on India's Conservation Breeding Initiative*, New Delhi, February 2008. The CZA is a statutory autonomous body under the Ministry of Environment. The Authority was established to oversee the functioning of the 200 or more zoos and wildlife centres in the country and to provide them with technical and other assistance for

improvement. Alongside national improvements in animal welfare, the co-ordination of *ex-situ* conservation of critically endangered wild animal species in India is one of the most important mandated functions of the CZA.

In May I opened the *19th Pan African Association of Zoos and Botanical Gardens Conference* Durban, South Africa. This was generously hosted by uShaka Sea World, the South African Association for Marine Biological Research, the City of Durban and the South African Government, representatives of whom we met. The conference was a great success, with attendees drawn from all over the African continent and beyond. In June, I gave the opening presentation on 'The Frozen Ark – saving the DNA of endangered species' for the international *BioCryobanks and Wildlife Conservation Symposium and Workshop*, Trier, Germany. An invite from the American Zoo Association to present to the 84th AZA Annual Conference, Milwaukee, USA in September, provided an ideal opportunity for a dialogue with the AZA's Board of Directors and to connect with CEOs and staff from zoos in the North American and Meso-American region. For me, the meeting highlight of the year was the *63rd WAZA Annual Conference* October 2008, which was superbly organized and hosted by Adelaide Zoo, Australia. Again, there were meetings with South Australian government ministers for environment and for tourism and the event ran concurrently with the International Zoo Educators (IZE) Conference and other WAZA partner meetings. The World Conservation Union (IUCN) and WAZA have teamed up to increase public awareness of conservation issues and improve access to research carried out in zoos, aquariums and wildlife or veterinary research establishments. A five-year Memorandum of Understanding, which was signed 17th December 2008 between IUCN and WAZA, will also create synergies and increase resources for conservation. The Memorandum reinforces the existing bond between the two organizations in order to achieve more and even better species conservation and associated work in education, sustainability, ecotourism, human development and poverty alleviation. The event was also the occasion for the retirement of Dr Peter Dollinger, Executive Director of WAZA. He was presented with the Heini Hediger Award, in recognition of a life-long commitment and service to veterinary science, zoos, animal welfare, statutory regulation and global conservation. His work will now be continued by the new WAZA Executive Director, Dr Gerald Dick, who took up his post in Bern in March 2008, following senior management experience with the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF).

Other personal and team activities in connection with international conservation and science are provided elsewhere in this report. As ever, our achievements as a conservation charity are dependent upon the tremendous commitment of our wider stakeholders, our members, the NEZS Chairman, the Trustees and our staff. May I warmly thank them all! In particular, I should thank the Director's team of Mark Pilgrim, Alasdair McNee and Simon Mann and my personal assistants Marie Brookfield, Kim Halliday and Claudine Gibson for their close support in an incredibly busy year!

A Year of Awards 2008

Chester Zoo's Horticultural team gained a Silver Gilt Medal for their 'Butterfly Garden' at the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Show, Tatton Park in July 2008. The Silver Gilt medal is second only to the highest medal - a Gold - and, therefore, a great achievement for the Zoo.

In October, the Society won both the 'North West in Bloom Award 2008 - Best Large Tourist Attraction' and also the 'Chester in Bloom Award 2008 – Best Tourist Attraction Award'.

ISO14001: Environmental Management System re-accreditation

Environmental Management Awards 2008: Awarded runner-up in the British Standards Institute and Institute of Environmental Manager and Auditing (Public Sector Category)

At the annual British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums awards ceremony held on 20th November, the NEZS gained two meritorious awards and five commendations, namely:

Meritorious Awards

Best Marketing Project: The Gardens at Chester Zoo

Best Research Project: Reconciliation, consolation and relationship quality in chimpanzees

Commendations

Best Education Project, Public and General Visitor: Can zoos risk delivering bad news?
Displaying and evaluating 'Hard Rain' – a disturbing and challenging exhibit

Best Education Project, Schools and Educational Institutions: Teachers telling us what they want: using focus groups to determine what teachers want from a field trip

Best Research Project: Education in zoo exhibits: Improving the design and use of interpretation in Realm of the Red Ape

Best New Zoo Enclosure: Realm of the Red Ape

Best Field Conservation Project: Sichuan Forest biodiversity project



The North of England Zoological Society 2007 to 2012 Strategy

We continue to pursue our vision of a diverse, thriving and sustainable natural world. Throughout 2008, the Trustee-approved strategy 'A Shared Vision' informed and guided the management team in planning, achieving and developing our mission and supporting business activities.

Overarching strategic statement:

To develop a substantial, expanding role in conservation of global biodiversity and habitat enhancement; and to support this through sustainable commercial activities, including managing the Zoo as a world class visitor attraction. To achieve this, we will:

Strategic Objective 1

Focus conservation activity where we can achieve greatest impact – and forge partnerships with appropriate bodies where doing so will maximise this impact.

EXPLANATION:

To ensure that the resources of NEZS are used most effectively to fulfil the mission, 'To be a major force in conserving biodiversity worldwide'.

Having a system to identify, assess, plan, prioritise, fund, implement and evaluate programmes and projects.

By 'appropriate bodies', we mean like minded organisations or coalitions of organisations. Partnerships could be developed for: business/marketing, conservational, educational, scientific or sustainability purposes. The purpose of these partnerships is to take us further than could be achieved in isolation. These bodies would only be those that conform to our ethics and values.

By 'impact', we mean achieving the greatest possible conservation benefit with the resources available.

Strategic Objective 2

Make clear, fundamental links between worldwide field programmes and zoo programmes, to increase conservation impact – and so that the Zoo becomes a showcase for our work in natural habitats.

EXPLANATION:

The activities within the Zoo should link closely with work in the field to achieve maximum benefit for both - and this link should be clear to our staff, visitors and stakeholders - explaining the work that we do and why we do it.

These links should create understanding of and empathy with the conservation issues and thereby generate practical action.

Activities would involve having staff from all areas of NEZS working in the field or bringing field staff to Chester for training. Other examples would be developing techniques in the Zoo that can be applied to the field, creating 'immersion' exhibits in the Zoo that simulate natural habitats.

Strategic Objective 3

Promote, support and sustain our conservation work through proactive education, marketing and research activities.

EXPLANATION:

Conservation is a core part of our brand. 'Promote' is telling everyone what we do by any means. 'Promote' is through scientific achievement and emotional engagement. It entails projecting a positive image, advertising, networking, offering our facilities and holding/participating in/ sponsoring workshops. It includes the means of promotion such as IT links, websites, engaging with local, regional and international community by contributing to boards, committees and collaborative initiatives. Additionally through contributing to or leading wider strategic exercises, twinning with other zoos or aquariums; through publications both scientific and popular, through engagement with the media advocacy, campaigning; giving lectures or supporting lecture programmes at home and abroad.



Strategic Objective 4

Make Chester Zoo the wildlife attraction of choice in the UK

EXPLANATION:

By 'choice' we mean; Zoo visitors, external partners (conservational, scientific, educational, business partners), staff, promotion opportunities (TV, radio, press etc., sponsors, award giving bodies, schools).

Also the 'choice' for those with conservation needs at home and abroad.

By 'attraction' we mean; unique, high quality, exciting, good reputation, memorable, fun, high standards, recognisable brand.

Strategic Objective 5

Manage our work and activities to ensure long-term sustainability

EXPLANATION:

By 'sustainability', we mean the stable, long-term continuation of the positive aspects of our work: financial, environmental (green practices), construction, animal management, human resources, etc.

In financial terms, 'sustainability' means that our overall income should match our expenditure.

In environmental terms, 'sustainability' means conducting our activities in a way that minimises or negates any negative impact on the environment for us and future generations. In terms of people, 'sustainability' means succession planning.

In terms of the collections, 'sustainability' means self-sustaining healthy populations of Zoo bred animals and plants.

Strategic Objective 6

Reduce financial dependency on Zoo visitors by identifying and developing other resource streams in support of our mission

EXPLANATION:

Visitors can be a variable source of income and fluctuate year-to-year due to aspects out of our control such as weather and the economy. By securing other means of funding (such as conservation grants, legacies, retail diversification, and commercial events) we will have a more robust Zoo economy with which to achieve our mission.

'Resources' could be financial, labour, voluntary work or materials 'in kind'. It could include better economic use of the wider Zoo land holdings.

Natural Vision Project

progress during 2008

Supporting Strategic Objective **4**

Simon Mann, Development Director

Development of the client brief for the 'Natural Vision Project' (previously titled "SuperZoo") continued in early 2008, with a series of workshops held with senior management and Trustees. A document entitled "Natural Vision at Chester Zoo", the product of these various sessions, was finalised in February 2008. This document represented the aspirational brief for the project and was approved and signed off by the senior management team and NEZS Trustees as representing the project vision and outline concept for the expansion plan.



This brief provided the starting point for the master-planners when they commenced work in mid-April 2008.

A £3.8m Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) between the North West Development Agency (NWDA) and NEZS was signed at a full Trustees' Meeting on Friday 25 March 2008. The GFA provided funding to develop the master-plan and to prepare outline and detailed planning applications for the project.

The consultant team for the delivery of the Natural Vision project were procured via European procurement legislation and resulted in the selection of Locum Consulting (business planning), Barton Willmore (planning consultant) and Turner and Townsend (project and cost management) in early March 2008.

Faber Maunsell, EDAW, and Proctor and Matthews, were selected at a meeting of NEZS Trustees in late March 2008 to provide engineering, master-planning and architecture services for the entire development. This appointment completed the consultant team necessary to deliver the conditions of the GFA. Commencing in early April 2008, representatives of NEZS, Chester Zoo management staff, the design team and NWDA attended a number of meetings and workshops throughout the year as the brief and design process progressed.

Proctor and Matthews Architects prepared concept work on three major buildings, including the development of the functional and operational brief. This included concept development for the revitalisation of the Main Entrance, an African Savannah exhibit to the south of the Zoo and the centrepiece of the Natural Vision project, the Heart of Africa bio-dome, located to the north of the Tropical House. This bio-dome is an approximately 15,000m² enclosure, authentically representing the tropical Congo Rainforest with internal and external viewing of major species including gorillas, chimpanzees and okapi, as well as incorporating a river ride through the heart of the building and canopy walks at 20m above ground level. The building will also be supported by a strong catering, retail and play offer.

A comprehensive master-plan framework document was prepared in August 2008 and defined the full scope of the proposed development which increases the size of the Zoo from 50 hectares to 75 hectares. It established the first phase of the master-plan including the Heart of Africa bio-dome as well as the main entrance and a second access off the A41 with enhanced parking. It is also proposed to develop in parallel a wildlife-themed hotel, Conservation College, education centre and canal-side Marina. This framework document was subsequently approved by the Trustees in late September 2008 and by the NWDA in October 2008.

Dow Schofield Watts, corporate financiers, were appointed by the Trustees in August 2008 to undertake a review of the project as a whole and comment on its financial and managerial viability. They presented their findings in a report

to the Trustees on 19 and 26 September 2008. The report was favourable and encouraged further development of the phase one elements. Consultation has taken place throughout 2008 with a wide variety of key stakeholders including: local residents, the NWDA, the new unitary authority Cheshire West and Chester, ecological representatives and numerous other advisory bodies. This will continue up to and beyond the planning application in late 2009. Design work on phase one of the project commenced in October 2008 and the detailed planning application (phase 1) and outline planning application (overall master-plan) are scheduled for submission in September 2009.

Progress towards Natural Vision in 2009

The NV project team is being enhanced by the inclusion of internationally renowned zoo designers. Gerard Visser, a Zoo masterplanner and exhibit designer from Rotterdam Zoo, and Rob Halpern, a horticultural specialist from the USA, will help the architects and staff shape the Heart of Africa exhibit over the coming months.

The brief for the Heart of Africa building and orientation centre at the Main Entrance is being developed in parallel with the scheme design, which will be developed in conjunction with a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties. It is also intended to run public consultation sessions at the Zoo and in and around Chester from May 2009.

There are a number of other initiatives being developed including the introduction of mobile telephone technology to improve access into the Zoo and reduce queuing times, and the provision of a themed bus that will run a dedicated service between Chester Railway Station and Chester Zoo throughout the school summer holidays. The Society plans to submit a 'hybrid' planning application in autumn 2009 which will include an outline application for the full masterplan and detailed applications for the Heart of Africa biodome, main entrance, second access off the A41 road and car parking by the Zoo.

On the present schedule, the other supporting schemes (hotel, Conservation College and education centre) will be submitted for detailed planning approval by the end of 2009.



Conservation and Education

Progressing Our Mission

Mark Pilgrim – Director of Conservation and Education

Realm of the Red Ape

Supporting Strategic Objectives

1 2 3 4

Core funding was awarded for the second year for our 'Realm of the Red Ape' Field Programme initiative, launched in 2007 alongside the completion of the new 'Realm of the Red Ape' exhibit. This was to clearly link major support in nature *in-situ* with a key development in the Zoo *ex-situ*.

The vital field programme is part-funded through our 'Keeper for a Day' scheme.

The key component of this programme is the Kinabatangan Orang-utan Conservation Project (KOCP) initiated in 1998 by the French conservation organisation Hutan. Our ongoing support for this project contributes towards Orang-utan research and population management, the reduction of human/Orang-utan conflict and enhances community involvement in local conservation activities. The KOCP also have a successful ecotourism initiative 'Red Ape Encounters', with visitor numbers increasing by 20% on last year and approximately 500 villagers benefiting directly from the project.

An additional element to this programme is the support of the KOCP Honorary Wildlife Wardens. The wardens' activities include patrolling the area to control human encroachments, wildlife monitoring, conflict mitigation and community awareness activities. 2008 was a successful year for the wardens; six poachers were arrested, illegal logging activity at two sites was prevented and a large-scale illegal sand dredge was stopped. These results demonstrate the benefits of employing wardens in an area of such strategic importance as Kinabatangan.

The RORA programme was also expanded this year by the funding of an additional project, the 'Sumatran Orang-utan Ecotourism Development Programme'. This project is based in GunungLeuser National Park, which has a large wildlife tourism industry. It provides participants with the opportunity to view Orang-utans on daily excursions into the forest. Working with staff at the National Park, the project aims to educate tour guides on ethical ecotourism practices. This knowledge will prevent groups of tourists being brought within close proximity of Orang-utans, thereby reducing the risk of disease transmission between humans and apes.

In the 'Realm of the Red Ape' exhibit at the Zoo, our Bornean and Sumatran Orang-utans have been thriving. In February, twenty year-old Sumatran female Emma gave birth to a baby girl, Indah – the first in our new facility. It is believed that Emma became pregnant shortly after moving in to the new house!

Conserving Asian Elephants

Supporting Strategic Objectives

1 2 3 4

The Assam Haathi Project (AHP) had another successful year, greatly assisted by the recruitment of an Elephant Research Assistant. The project continues to expand and is working with an increasing number of villages affected by human-elephant conflict.

The project now employs and has trained around fifty local staff, who assist communities to protect their crops and homes from elephants. Achievements include the distribution of around thirty spotlights, construction of five watchtowers and the erection of a 2km hot-wire fence.

These measures have a major impact for the villagers they assist. For example, it means they are now able to grow crops on land that used to be left fallow for several years, due to the threat from the elephants. Most importantly, this work is increasing the ability of villagers to be able to protect their own property and thereby increases people's tolerance of the elephants.

Alternative livelihoods continue to be an important tool in helping communities cope with the elephants. Crops such as chilli, turmeric and black pepper are good cash crops and, unlike rice, they are not eaten by the elephants. The AHP ran two cash crop training workshops in 2008 which were well attended. Chilli is proving to be a very versatile crop as it has a commercial value and the government spice board has signed a substantial contract for plants from AHP communities. It can also be dried and used to repel elephants when burnt, or smeared on fences with grease to make a very effective elephant barrier.

Capacity building and training for AHP staff is also a primary role of the AHP. Chester Zoo's Conservation Officer visited the project to provide further training on data collection and recording, and to assist in project development. A number of AHP staff travelled from Assam to the International Elephant Conference in Thailand and also visited Sabah (northern Borneo) where another Chester Zoo project partner is working on similar human-elephant conflict problems with the Borneo Elephant, a subspecies of Asian Elephant.

The AHP hosted several visitors including an MSc student from Oxford University who completed a study on historical human-elephant conflict trends in relation to forest degradation. The project was also assessed by an independent expert, who produced a glowing mid-term report on the AHP for the UK Government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), from whom we receive substantial funding for our project through the Darwin Initiative.

China – a focus for conservation

Supporting Strategic Objectives

1 2 3

A regional focus for our conservation support in China is Sichuan and in 2008 this area was devastated by massive earthquakes. Fortunately our actual project sites were largely unaffected. However, NEZS contributed substantial financial emergency support via our twinned partner Chengdu Giant Panda Breeding and Research Base. This went to areas which had been affected by the earthquake and was essential funding for the continuation of a community education project in the region.

Our core project in Sichuan is the Sichuan Forest Biodiversity Project. Working closely with local communities and government, the project is protecting a network of broadleaf forest reserves which are rich in biodiversity, including many endemic species. All three reserves, Mamize, Laojunshan and Heizhugou, now have permanently staffed field stations, which have benefited greatly from Chester Zoo funding. These field stations provide a base for training of local staff, research, surveys and warden activities. The project has an excellent relationship with local communities, a key to its success. So far, community benefits have included new breeding bulls, alternative livelihoods (e.g. producing honey from beehives) and the installation of new drinking water pumps. The project also supports major education and awareness initiatives involving local communities and school children.

Also in the Sichuan region, Chester Zoo continued its support of conservation education in Mamize, and a conservation education programme targeting primary school children in Chengdu. We also provided support for Red Panda DNA research and Monal Pheasant conservation studies conducted by the Sichuan University.

In the Zoo, our Red Pandas produced their second pair of cubs in two years. Visitors and staff were able to watch the cubs' secretive first few weeks on specially installed nest cameras.

Our vitally important South-east Asian turtle collection was boosted during the year by the addition of two further species. The Black-breasted Leaf Turtle and the Flowerback Box Turtle both originate from the forests of Vietnam and South China where, in recent years, they have been collected from the wild in huge numbers for the luxury food and traditional Chinese medicine market. It is hoped that both species will breed at the Zoo in the years to come and contribute to the growing international zoo populations established to safeguard against their extinction.

Support also continued for another species covered by the China Programme, the Blue-crowned Laughingthrush. Chester Zoo and the other project partners continued to support core activities and additionally support was provided for a DNA study by Cardiff University. 2008 saw the discovery of an additional breeding site for this bird in Wuyuan, a great boost to the project, and protection of the species at a number of sites. A Conservation Action Plan for the Blue-crowned Laughingthrush was also developed. We continue to work with this species in the Zoo as part of a European co-operative breeding programme, a vital part of its conservation.



14 Years of Conservation in the Philippines

Supporting Strategic Objectives

1 2 3

The Philippine islands are one of the Earth's most significant 'biodiversity hotspots' and Chester Zoo has been supporting work there since 1994. Our project contribution initially focused on the endemic and severely threatened Philippine Spotted Deer. Since then, our partnerships have grown and we now support a wide range of important projects.

CEBU

The Island of Cebu is home to a number of highly threatened endemic species including the Cebu Flower-pecker, Black Shama and Cebu Cinnamon Tree birds, and is recognised internationally as an 'Important Bird Area' and 'Important Biodiversity Area'. Chester Zoo supports the Alcoy Forest and Wildlife Protection Programme, leading to an increase in the number of wardens from 14 to 52. Our conservation impact is demonstrated by an increase in Cinnamon Tree and Black Shama numbers. Chester Zoo also funded the building of a new research centre that will assist capacity building and support evidence-based conservation.

PANAY AND NEGROS

Chester Zoo supports breeding centres on the islands of Panay and Negros as part of the West Visayan Threatened Endemic Species Conservation Programme. These centres have established breeding programmes for several threatened endemic species. The success of these programmes has led to the first re-introduction project for the Philippine Spotted Deer and also Visayan Warty Pig, planned for 2009.

The Philippine Hornbill Conservation Programme is also focused on Panay and Negros. There has been continued breeding success of captive Visayan Wreathed-billed Hornbills. Monitoring activities in the wild recorded 752 viable nests. Active protection of these nests has led to a significant reduction in hornbill nest poaching from 50% in 2001 to 5% today.

Complementing this work in the field, Chester Zoo continues to be heavily committed to the *ex-situ* conservation of the Philippine Spotted Deer, Visayan Warty Pig and Visayan Tarictic Hornbill in the Zoo. All three species bred successfully during 2008 and the breeding of this subspecies of hornbill represented a European first.

Our young pair of rare Philippine Crocodiles were moved into their new enclosure in time for the summer. This heavily planted exhibit has transformed the far end of the Tropical Realm and will hopefully provide the ideal conditions in which this Critically Endangered species can breed once our animals reach sexual maturity.

POLILLO

Polillo and its surrounding Islands are a major focus of Chester Zoo's Philippine Programme activities. The Philippine Islands Biodiversity Protection and Monitoring Project works to strengthen community based conservation to ensure the protection of species. Support is targeted on funding field wardens' salaries, education and training workshops as well as endemic bird, reptile and amphibian research. In 2008, there was an increase in protected areas covered and currently there are 11 Local Conservation Areas, with another 3 proposed. In addition, 70 new forest wardens were trained. Another component is work on the freshwater fish and Chester Zoo staff ran a fish identification training workshop at the Los Banos Fish Ark development.

PHILIPPINE COCKATOO

We are a significant partner in a programme to help save the critically endangered Philippine Cockatoo. The project incorporates community-based resource management, education, wardening, capacity building, translocation of birds and a public pride campaign. In 2008, there was an increase in numbers of the Philippine Cockatoo, with 32 pairs and 49 fledglings now on Rasa Island. Conservation breeding centres have been established, linked with the important education component of this project.



Mascarenes Islands

Supporting Strategic Objectives

1 2 3

NEZS continues to work closely with the Mauritius Wildlife Foundation (MWF) on several projects to save critically endangered endemic plants and animals.

In addition to our financial assistance, support was given through Chester Zoo staff who provided bird rearing expertise for the Olive White-eye and Mauritius Fody projects. MWF staff from these projects also visited the UK to receive training at Chester. These projects have been remarkably successful with excellent fledgling success for both species. The translocated population of Mauritius Fody on Ile aux Aigrettes is breeding successfully and plans are progressing on establishing a second insurance population of the species on Round Island. Translocations of Olive White-eye to Ile aux Aigrettes are also occurring. Whilst this particular initiative is at an earlier stage in the process of establishing a secondary population, the project is already proving successful with 17 birds so far established, many of which are nesting.

Education and awareness support from Chester Zoo also continue on this programme. Chester Zoo education staff provided training for tour guides and facilitated workshops covering a range of skills and techniques in the delivery of conservation messages. In partnership with the Mauritius Government and MWF, our staff play a major role in the development and implementation of an education and ecotourism plan for Ile aux Aigrettes.

The Echo Parakeet and Rodrigues Fruit Bat are two species that Chester Zoo has been supporting for many years, and support for these also continued in 2008. The Echo Parakeet project had another successful year with a record number of chicks fledged. We also continued our valued partnership with Shoals Rodrigues who demarcated the first of four new marine reserves in 2008 and continue their highly successful research and education/awareness programmes.

Our support for critically endangered plant conservation was also expanded in 2008. The Field Gene Bank Project now boasts nurseries on Ile aux Aigrettes, Round Island and Rodrigues, with 21 threatened endemic plants currently benefiting from this initiative. Propagation and management methods continue to improve and reciprocal visits allowed Chester Zoo staff to provide on-site training in Mauritius, whilst MWF horticulture staff learned new skills during time spent working at Chester Zoo and we learned from them. A new project in 2008 was support for the re-forestation of the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve on Rodrigues, which is one of only two last relict forests on the island. The project will restore the forests - home to over 30 endemic species - with the possibility of promoting ecotourism there in the future.

Out of Africa - Conserving Black Rhinos

Supporting Strategic Objectives

1 2 3


2008 saw us reap the rewards of a number of years of hard work and focus both in the Zoo and in the field on the critically endangered Black Rhinoceros.

The most significant arrival at Chester Zoo during 2008 was the birth of our first Black Rhino in ten years. Male calf Asani was born on 29th October and was the first for ten year old mother Kitani and father Sammy. The birth is important in the international zoo breeding programme for this species, a programme which has already seen animals returned to Africa to help boost fragile wild populations. A second pregnancy was confirmed during 2008 in our female Emma and hopes are high for the arrival of a second calf in May 2009. We received a fifth female rhino, Malindi, from Magdeburg Zoo in Germany to join our group and further increase our options for breeding this critically endangered species.

Working closely with Save the Rhino International, this year has seen the addition of another component to the Black Rhino Programme, in Selous, Tanzania. This has caused our work in Tanzania to focus on two projects in Selous and Mkomazi. In Kenya, we continue to work with projects in the Chyulu Hills National Park and in the Laikipia District.

The Selous Game Reserve in Tanzania is the second largest game reserve in the world and is home to the largest, free-living indigenous population of Black Rhino in Tanzania, accounting for 70% of the country's Black Rhino numbers. Once thought to be extinct in Selous, the current Black Rhino population estimate is a mix of around 20 of what are considered to be the Eastern Black Rhino subspecies in the north and, in the south, about 25 of the South Central subspecies.

Poaching remains a problem in Selous, and in the late 1990's the Selous Rhino Trust project was formed to combat this. This is a joint project between the Selous Rhino Trust and the Tanzania Division of Wildlife, targeting anti-poaching activity and monitoring of the Black Rhino population. Since the project started, no rhinos have been found dead in the reserve, however there is increasing poaching of elephants and fish and it is believed that poachers are currently trying to locate rhinos. This project aims to ensure that poachers are thwarted from carrying out illegal activities. Chester Zoo has provided support to this project for the first time, ensuring that vital work will continue to protect these Critically Endangered animals.



In Mkomazi, Chester Zoo's Conservation Manager, continues to help co-ordinate the development of an education outreach programme where schoolchildren, community groups and local authorities are brought into the park to witness the conservation work and view the animals. This project is based on a similar very successful one in the Laikipia District. In 2008, Ephantus Mugo, the Education Officer for the Laikipia Wildlife Forum in Kenya, visited Chester for three weeks to experience our conservation education programme here, communicate his skills to our staff and pick up new techniques to take back to the project.

The Chyulu Hills Rhino Project is a collaboration of rhino rangers from the Kenya Wildlife Service and local Maasai. The project supports the protection and monitoring of rhinos in Chyulu, which are a recently discovered native population and potentially important genetic stock. The project also supports game scouts who patrol the region for illegal activities. Each year they apprehend several poachers and remove hundreds of snares.

Ongoing work in Chyulu includes training Kenya Wildlife Service staff to collect DNA from rhino dung and carry out DNA analysis so that the genetic relationship between the Chyulu population and others can be established. Chester Zoo's Conservation Officer also visited Chyulu in 2008 to provide advice and training on utilising Geographical Information System (GIS) tracking technology within the project. The use of GIS will increase the efficiency of data recording and allow data analysis such as investigating poaching trends or wildlife movement.

Nigeria

Supporting Strategic Objectives

1 2 3

Nigeria's largest National Park and one of its last remaining savanna forest areas is Gashaka Gumti National Park. This is a particularly important habitat for primates and holds the last remaining viable population of the Nigerian chimpanzee subspecies.

Once again, Chester Zoo provided core funding for the Gashaka Primate Project, the major component of our Nigeria Programme. Initiated in 1999, this project combines research with conservation, to understand ecology and primate behaviour. The very presence of researchers directly aids conservation through deterring poachers.

Preventing illegal activities from being carried out in the National Park boundary has been an on going conservation problem, exacerbated by the lack of a boundary marking the perimeter of the National Park. In 2004, Chester Zoo began to fund work to construct this vitally important border demarcation around the National Park. 2008 saw the completion of the boundary demarcation around the Nigerian border of Gashaka Gumti National Park – the international border with Cameroon is yet to be demarcated and will involve a Boundary Commission. With three sides of the demarcation complete, work began on improving communication and ranger access in order to patrol the park more efficiently. This involves funding the construction of roads to allow better access to the park and building radio transmitter stations to ensure the rangers can communicate throughout most of the park area.

Support also continued for the Nigerian Montane Forest Project, with funding provided for restoring the Ngel Nyaki Forest Reserve and understanding its avian pollinators (who help fertilise many plant species). This project works closely with the community, by training students and running workshops to teach local people the conservation techniques that have been developed. The herbarium now holds over 400 specimens with many more species still to be collected and named.

Jaguar Conservation

Supporting Strategic Objectives

1 2 3 4

Human-Jaguar conflict is a major obstacle in the conservation of Jaguars. Throughout much of their range, particularly on the boundaries of protected areas, Jaguars prey on the livestock of small communities or commercial ranches. This in turn leads to negative attitudes towards Jaguars and gives rise to their persecution.

Chester Zoo, working in partnership with WildCru at Oxford University, is conducting extensive research into the different factors that contribute to human-Jaguar conflict. The study aims to analyse all of the factors that contribute to the issue and to produce a strategy that will aid in the management of human-Jaguar conflict throughout Central and South America. This research has also led to Chester Zoo initiating the Jaguar Conservation Network (www.jaguarnetwork.org). The Jaguar Conservation Network is a portal for information and collaboration between Jaguar researchers, conservationists and people affected by Jaguar predation on livestock. It has developed as a great tool to assist everyone working on Jaguar conservation.

Chester Zoo also continues to provide grants to other organisations working on Jaguar conservation. This year we supported a project in Guatemala helping to implement livestock husbandry practices designed to mitigate human-carnivore conflicts, particularly those involving Jaguar. In Belize, we provided support for the Runaway Creek Nature Reserve. This reserve is an important biodiversity area and home to Jaguars and Spider Monkeys. Chester Zoo's support will fund ranger patrols to protect the reserve and help to initiate a local environmental education outreach programme.

Acting Locally

Supporting Strategic Objectives

1 2 3 5

2008 was a particularly successful year for the Native Species Programme at Chester Zoo. Wildlife recording was a major focus with events such as our first 'Big Garden Birdwatch' coinciding with the RSPB national scheme in January, 'Bug Day' in June, and the 'Cheshire Recorders' Conference' hosted at the Zoo in September. This conference, run by rECOrd staff, attracted almost 100 delegates and produced more than 150 wildlife records for the Zoo site alone.

The success and popularity of public wildlife identification and recording events, enabled by our partnership with rECOrd, led to the evolution of the collaborative 'Count Me In!' project, which obtained funding (£72,000) from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Esmee Fairbairn Trust. The Count Me In! Project Officer joined the Zoo in November and began planning an exciting events programme for 2009 and 2010.

2008 was a good year for wildlife breeding at the Zoo too: Kingfishers bred on the canal, Mud snails and Lesser silver water beetles were recorded again in Zoo ponds and Bee orchids were found growing behind 'Spirit of the Jaguar'. Small mammal surveys confirmed that Harvest mice are still present in fields bordering the Shropshire Union Canal and Water voles were seen regularly around the Zoo, following the 2007 releases. In preparation for a national survey in 2009, advice was provided to researchers working for the Mammal Society and WildCru on a project to refine Harvest mouse survey techniques in the UK.

After 4 years of Zoo support in cash and kind, the 'Mammals of Cheshire' book was published in August. Feedback received has been extremely positive and it is hoped the book will achieve its aims to raise local awareness and promote mammal recording in the region.

Research work for the North West Dormouse Partnership developed further and Chester Zoo's co-ordination and involvement continued. Four papers on different aspects of the research were presented at the 7th International Dormouse Conference. Of particular interest was the genetic work done by colleagues at the University of Liverpool, who have shown that many dormouse litters have multiple fathers; a fact not recorded before.

Plant conservation work saw significant milestones reached in 2008. Common juniper plants, from cuttings raised in the Zoo nursery, were returned to Prestatyn Hillside, where Denbighshire Countryside Service has undertaken habitat management work to ensure their survival. Further cuttings from Juniper on the Great Orme were also taken and air layering was carried out on Welsh cotoneaster plants there. Limestone woundwort plants raised in the Zoo were also returned to the wild at two sites in North Wales. Horticulture staff were involved in work with some rare native aquatic plants alongside a community of conservation partners and contributed to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) targets for these species.

Regional funding support was also provided for:

Barn owl nest box building in North Wales, construction of an artificial Sand martin nesting bank near Northwich, genetic research on Welsh cotoneaster with the National Botanic Garden of Wales and Aberystwyth University, bluebell planting near Nantwich and Water vole conservation through mink control on the River Gowy.

Projects supported by NEZS Grants

Supporting Strategic Objectives

1 2 3 6

NEZS supports a diverse range of conservation, education, research, sustainability, ecotourism and human development activities both in the Zoo and externally, often in partnership with other organisations. This support may be ongoing as with our major programmes such as that in partnership with University College London in Nigeria and our Asian Elephant programme - Assam Haathi Project - or through one-off or annual grants including scholarships.

Criteria for our funding support for projects include conservation impact, feasibility, qualification of project personnel, capacity building, benefits to local communities, relevance to other conservation initiatives of the Zoo and opportunities for technical support from zoo staff. Applications are requested to be made on our standard grant application forms and these are formally reviewed by at least two qualified people before a funding decision is made. Where further funding from applicants previously supported is requested, then the outcome of earlier support, including timely and full reports is especially relevant.

All applications, reviews and funding outcomes are held on our conservation database and projects are tracked to ensure that reports are received, including how the funds awarded were actually spent. Once projects finish, or at suitable periods for ongoing projects, the Society conducts evaluations for every project supported to equate the conservation impact of projects against the investments made by the Society. Awards made are reported bi-monthly to Council and NEZS staff and published each year in the Annual Report.

For all our larger programmes and for some of our ongoing smaller projects then substantial Society staff input and regular site visits ensure that the programmes and projects are effectively monitored. Additionally, partnerships developed with other conservation organisations (including for example EcoSystems-India in Assam) are such that those organisations have permanent staff on site, who are able to determine that funds granted are properly accounted. A number of programmes and partnerships have formal Memoranda of Agreements or Understanding and for all, as with all grants, the Society always indicates that a condition of funding is that reports with end of term accounts are received.

A small number of grants for our *in-situ* support are a condition of our joining international *ex-situ* conservation programmes or reflect other international zoo co-operation. A small emergency fund is also available to support immediate conservation or welfare needs, for example in the case of the recent earthquakes in Sichuan, China, or the political unrest impacting on gorilla conservation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In these instances, funding decisions are based on need and subject to consensus by senior Zoo staff in liaison with Council.

2008 Project Support

Each year, Chester Zoo supports a large number of projects covering a wide range of activities worldwide and in 2008 we funded over 60 grants. The demand for grant funding increases each year and is substantially higher than the number of grants the Zoo can support. Subsequently, project applications undergo a rigorous review process supporting those projects which will have the greatest conservation impact and best complement our current conservation activities. Described below is a selection of some of the grants from 2008:

HORNBILLS

Threatened hornbills have featured heavily again this year in our grants scheme with funding provided for two successful projects which we have previously supported. These are the continuation of our support for the Tapoh Conservation Education Centre in Thailand and the Mabula Ground Hornbill Project, South Africa.

RHINOS

We have been working closely with Save the Rhino International for several years on our Black Rhino Programme. This year has also seen the addition of two new rhino projects, again in collaboration with Save the Rhino International, working with other rhino species.

The Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary in Way Kambas National Park currently holds five Sumatran Rhino as part of a breeding programme for this critically endangered species. The Sumatran Rhino Conservation and Propagation Project was set up, and vital funding provides management and veterinary care for the rhinos currently at the sanctuary.

Linking regionally with our Assam Haathi Project, we also supported the 'Strengthening Protection of Translocated Rhinos in Manas National Park and Building Stronger Community Interface' project. This aims to re-establish a population of Greater One-horned Rhinoceros in Manas National Park, Assam.

SOUTH AMERICA

Chester Zoo is involved in a wide range of projects throughout South America. In particular, a project which we have supported for many years is Lowland Tapir research – originally set up in the Atlantic rainforest and now also in Brazil. Patricia Medici, project co-ordinator of the Lowland Tapir Conservation Initiative in Brazil, received the IUCN Golden Ark Award 2008 for her internationally outstanding tapir protection efforts. This is a highly successful project which has established a long-term monitoring program to investigate the ecology of the Lowland Tapir population in Brazil.

We also continued our support for both Black Lion Tamarin and Buffy-headed Capuchin research in Brazil. In addition, we funded a Red-billed Curassow Action Plan Officer in the Atlantic Forest, Brazil, to aid the conservation of key habitat areas for this species.

EMERGENCY FUNDS

During the troubles in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), concern grew for the rangers and Mountain Gorillas of the Virunga National Park, when rangers were prevented from entering the park to carry out their vital monitoring work. This is one of only two sub-populations of this critically endangered species and the gorillas are under pressure due to this political instability. Chester Zoo provided emergency funds to help support the rangers in Virunga National park, who are vital to the continued protection of this important Mountain Gorilla population.

ISLAND SPECIES

Following several years of support for the project, Chester Zoo again funded the Partula Snail study on French Polynesia during 2008. This research aims to conserve the remaining endemic partulid snails, after many species were lost due to being devoured by an introduced carnivorous snail.

Chester Zoo also gave support to the Mabuwaya Foundation *in-situ* conservation of the Philippine Crocodile. This support was given along with six other European zoos which hold the species. Collaborative European zoo funding was also provided for the Komodo Dragon project on the Wae Wuul Reserve in Indonesia, supporting community awareness and wildlife protection at the reserve. Also in Indonesia, Chester Zoo provided financial support for national species planning workshops for Anoa, Babirusa and Banteng (wild cattle and pigs). In the Caribbean, on the island of St Lucia, Chester Zoo supported the first full-scale population estimate of the St Lucia Amazon Parrot.

STUDENTSHIPS AND RICHARD HUGHES SCHOLARSHIP

In 2008, Chester Zoo funded nine studentship projects. These included projects on the feeding ecology of the Southern Gentle Lemur in Madagascar, the distribution of Owl Monkeys in Panama, and on ecotourism and its potential for Mountain Gorilla conservation in Uganda.

The Richard Hughes Scholarship is open to applicants involved in any type of activity or project that deals with issues of elephant management, welfare or conservation. In 2008, this was jointly awarded between two projects: 'Crop damage by elephants in Tanzania: quantification, perception and prevention' and 'Human-elephant conflict in Cambodia: an investigation in frequency, hotspots and crop choice'.

Please see Conservation Activities Worldwide in the appendix for a more comprehensive list of projects supported in 2008.

Working in Partnership

Supporting Strategic Objectives

1 2 3 4 6

In setting strategic conservation objectives, NEZS recognises that we will achieve the greatest impact by working in partnership with other like-minded regional and global organisations.

Chester Zoo's status and reputation within zoo and aquarium associations such as BIAZA, EAZA and WAZA continues to grow as we help to lead the development of these organisations into significant players on the 21st century global conservation stage. The Director General is now President of WAZA and our Head of Discovery and Learning is President of the International Zoo Educators' Association. We also work with other regional zoo associations such as the South East Asian Zoo Association, the Latin American Zoo Association, the Chinese Association of Zoological Gardens and the South Asian Zoo Association, ensuring that Chester Zoo's reach and influence within the zoo and aquarium community is on a global scale.

Regional strategic involvement in biodiversity conservation was maintained through membership of the steering group of the Cheshire Regional Biodiversity Partnership, various taxon-based biodiversity groups in North Wales and the Sustainable Cheshire Forum and the BIAZA Native Species working group. An increasing number of Chester Zoo's native species projects originate from higher level connections and communication and we are increasingly recognised as valuable partners for conservation.

Chester Zoo staff continue to work closely with BIAZA, the British Veterinary Association, British Veterinary Zoological Society and DEFRA in helping to guide the UK and EU responses to emerging diseases that threaten our animals.

Our conservation, research and education work is often carried out in partnership with UK academic organisations such as the University of Liverpool, University of Manchester, Oxford University, Manchester Metropolitan University, Liverpool John Moores University, University College London, Chester University and others. Links with some of these institutions are further enhanced with Chester Zoo staff roles as visiting lecturers or service on faculty boards. Further afield, as the result of our conservation outreach, we are forging increasing links with overseas universities such as the University of Los Baños in the Philippines and the Universities of Morelia and Cuernavaca in Mexico. Broader partnerships with functional groups of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) also help bring the Zoo's conservation agenda forward (see box sections opposite).

IUCN World Conservation Congress and Countdown 2010

Chester Zoo is a member of IUCN, the World Conservation Union. The Director General, along with NEZS conservation staff attended the 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress, Barcelona, in October 2008. The Congress is the world's largest sustainability summit involving over 7,000 delegates from governments, NGOs, businesses, the UN and academic institutions. The Congress was intense, involving workshops, meetings, debates, exhibits and launches of new agreements and strategies – all focusing on providing ideas, actions and solutions for a diverse and sustainable world. The FFSG was showcased in the IUCN Species Pavilion, where the FFSG poster and slide shows were exhibited. There were also a number of workshops and debates that examined the link between biodiversity conservation and human livelihoods, why species are important to people and the role of species in human development. The Director General was on the expert panel during two workshops and put across a strong position on the value of zoos for raising awareness of the importance of species. Chester Zoo sponsored a motion entitled 'Guidelines regarding research and scientific collecting of threatened species', which was adopted during the Members' assembly, as was the WAZA motion 'Stopping the amphibian crisis', which Chester Zoo supported.

The IUCN-UK Committee arranged an All-Party Parliamentary Seminar on Countdown 2010 at the Houses of Parliament in April 2008 for the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Wildlife and Conservation. The meeting was Chaired by Angela Smith MP, with UK Committee Chair (and NEZS Trustee) Chris Mahon leading the Seminar. Speakers on behalf of the IUCN UK Committee were the NEZS Director General, who presented on 'Countdown 2010: An Overview' and Mike Pienkowski (Chairman UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum), Sarah Fowler (Co-Chair IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group) and Peter Bridgewater (Chair UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee). At the end of the meeting, Ms Smith welcomed the presentations and requested that the UK Committee return in 2009 to provide a seminar on the report 'Who Pays for Biodiversity?' Ms Smith suggested that Defra was under pressure regarding the 2010 targets and this possibly prevented the mainstreaming of some conservation issues or engagement with local authorities. This lack of engagement over the biodiversity duty could, in turn, adversely affect chances of private sector involvement in these issues. Ms Smith concluded by noting that the electorate needed to be persuaded to become involved, and that politicians of all parties needed to assist by advancing the biodiversity agenda.

IUCN-SSC/Wetlands International Freshwater Fish Specialist Group (FFSG)

The NEZS/Chester Zoo hosts and supports the FFSG and our Director General is the Global Chair.

As Chair of the SSC Freshwater Fish Specialist Group, Gordon attended the first-ever SSC Specialist Group Chairs' Meeting in February 2008. This was kindly sponsored by the Environment Agency, Abu Dhabi. In addition to approximately 90 SSC Specialist Group Chairs' attending the meeting, the IUCN Director General, various senior IUCN staff members, Commission Chairs and Regional Directors were also present. This made it a most meaningful gathering in terms of strengthening the SSC organisation, while also building relationships across the different parts of IUCN. The purpose of this meeting was to honour Specialist Group Chairs who have given so much of their voluntary time and energy to the IUCN and SSC over the years, and to in turn express their gratitude and recognition for the unprecedented contributions to conservation from their Specialist Group members and funders. The meeting also provided opportunities for the Chairs to share their experiences with each other and discuss cross-cutting conservation issues, as well as a platform for learning and capacity building that will ensure the persistence of the cumulative SSC knowledge into the future.

The 4th Annual FFSG Meeting was held in Chester Zoo in March 2008. The meeting was attended by 34 FFSG members and associates with representation from around the globe, including Jane Madgwick, CEO of Wetlands International (WI) who led discussions on options for future WI involvement in the collaboration. The first day of the meeting was devoted to updates from FFSG members on: regional issues for freshwater fish conservation; reports on ongoing FFSG projects; IUCN related FFSG project involvement (mainly in Africa and Europe); WI interests in freshwater fish conservation and expectations of the FFSG, and a number of special topics such as aquaculture, conservation and cryo-preservation. Gordon presented an update on the Al Ain SSC Chairs' meeting and the imminent employment of a part-time Programme Officer Claudine Gibson (now in post) to help administer and develop FFSG activities. A workshop was held on the second day of the meeting, which focused on key topics such as: implications of the proposed restructuring of the Species Survival Commission (SSC); options for making the Red List Evaluation process more robust and auditable; progressing the FFSG Strategy document and communications brochure; and potential options for publication of an FFSG Book.

With the kind financial support of IUCN Netherlands there was a Central Africa Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment Workshop, Yaoundé, Cameroon, 2-6 June 2008. Gordon is one of a handful of experts on freshwater fishes in West Africa, and as such was invited to participate in a workshop on species identification and conservation assessment and also help deliver Red List training for African fish scientists. As a result of

discussions at the IUCN Freshwater Fish Red List meeting in Cameroon, the FFSG/Chester Zoo and partners drafted and submitted a motion entitled 'IUCN Guidelines regarding research and scientific collecting of threatened species', which was adopted during the IUCN Congress, Barcelona 2008.

FFSG communications and outreach have increased significantly in 2008. This includes FFSG presentations given at several international meetings. For example, at the invitation of FishBase (a global fish and fisheries computerised database organisation) Gordon attended the 2008 FishBase Symposium, Stockholm, Sweden and gave a presentation entitled 'Global Conservation of Freshwater Fishes: the role of the Freshwater Fish Specialist Group'. The presentation was well received and a number of new contacts were established. A new FFSG Newsletter is being developed and two editions were produced and distributed to global fish experts in May and July. Members are becoming increasingly active with contributions and also to the development and realisation of the FFSG Strategy. At the invitation of Wetlands International, Gordon travelled to Malaysia in July 2008, to have discussions on potential collaborations within South East Asian regional wetlands conservation programmes and the Malaysian Zoological Society. During the trip, Gordon was hosted by Zoo Negara, a WAZA Member Institution in Kuala Lumpur which has developed an impressive Wetlands Aquarium. Gordon gave a presentation to Zoo Negara staff on 'Working with WAZA'. Closer to home, Gordon, Claudine Gibson and Colin Grist (NEZS Aquarium Projects Co-ordinator) attended a meeting in September at the UK's Freshwater Biological Association (FBA) headquarters by Lake Windermere, Cumbria. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss potential future collaborations between the FBA, the FFSG and Chester Zoo. The meeting was very useful and follow-up activities are being progressed on opportunities for CZ/FFSG to become involved with UK native aquatic species conservation, including the development of plans for an FBA 'conservation aquarium' facility.

Gordon and Claudine participated in a planning meeting at the headquarters of Wetlands International (WI) Wageningen, Netherlands. The aims of the meeting were to identify and initiate linkages between the FFSG and WI Global Programmes and activities, discuss potential joint project development and plan upcoming events and opportunities. Of particular interest was the WI Indonesian National Peatlands Programme, for which a funding proposal is being developed with FFSG participation. WI has integrated this into a wider funding proposal which involves 'carbon trading'. The full proposal was discussed with the Netherlands Embassy in Jakarta and submitted to the Indonesian Government in December, with funding decisions to be made in Spring 2009.

2008: Year of the Frog and Amphibian Ark

Supporting Strategic Objectives

1 2 3 4 5 6

Amphibians and frogs in particular have been very high on our agenda in 2008 with a number of initiatives across the organisation focussed on addressing the catastrophic global decline of this major group of animals.



Amphibian Ark

The Amphibian Ark is a global programme of IUCN and WAZA under the chairmanship of the Director General. It launched a global campaign 2008 Year of the Frog to galvanise world-wide initiatives intended to save amphibians from extinction. The main goal of the campaign was to generate public awareness and understanding of the current amphibian extinction crisis (brought about by habitat loss, epidemic disease and other factors); and also to ensure sustainability of rescued frog populations by creating funding for conservation work that will extend well beyond 2008. The millions of dollars raised so far world-wide, have helped develop the capacity to manage ex-situ conservation and educational programmes. The money will also help fund global Amphibian Ark co-ordination activities and regional initiatives such as emergency rescue and treatment of frogs suffering from a potentially lethal fungal disease. Gordon and Dr Jeff Bonner of the Saint Louis Zoo joined Kermit the Frog at a highly publicized Congressional Hearing on Capitol Hill in March 2008. This drew much attention to the plight of amphibians worldwide. At the end of the hearing, the Disney Corporation handed over a generous cheque for \$250,000 to be applied to amphibian conservation.

The Zoo team of Kevin Buley and Richard Gibson from Chester and Lesley Dickie from ZSL organised the Global Amphibian Extinction Crisis seminar at the Linnean Society of London in November 2008 and Gordon gave the introductory presentation to an audience of Fellows of the Society. The aim of the meeting was to examine the reasons for the decline in the world's amphibian populations - up to a third of which are threatened with extinction, and half of all species are in population decline. Among other factors, the recently identified amphibian fungal disease, *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (Bd), is believed to be the most immediate factor in amphibian extinction globally. This symposium also examined possible solutions to these

problems. Gordon chaired sessions and delivered the closing address at a separate ZSL Symposium in November on Halting the Global Decline in Amphibians: Research and Practice. The keynote speaker was AARK Patron Sir David Attenborough, with 200 other contributors and delegates drawn from all around the globe. The purpose of the meeting was to bring together researchers and conservation practitioners to discuss current threats and offer potential solutions to the biodiversity crisis now generally attributed to habitat loss and alteration, unsustainable trade, the impact of invasive species, climate change and diseases, particularly Bd (see above). The results of the Symposium will be published as a volume of research papers in 2009. Volume 42 of the International Zoo Yearbook 2007 was published in May 2008 with Gordon as guest editor. This publication includes Gordon and Kevin Zippel's introduction: 'Can zoos and aquariums ensure the survival of amphibians in the 21st century?'

Our new Curator of Lower Vertebrates & Invertebrates joined the zoo in March 2008 and brought to the role an additional responsibility – that of Taxon Officer for the Amphibian Ark (AARK). Up to twenty-five percent of the curator's time is spent in this role which is currently focused on helping countries and regions around the world prioritise conservation activities for their threatened amphibian fauna.

This involves facilitating dedicated workshops around the world with a range of local and international amphibian experts providing the necessary knowledge. Quite often these rare gatherings of experts are also used to run conservation and husbandry workshops on the day following the prioritisation work.

These AARK workshops have so far been conducted in Europe, Madagascar, USA, and South Africa, Panama, Mexico, Costa Rica and Malaysia. Many more prioritisation and husbandry workshops are scheduled for 2009.

A-pods at Chester Zoo

Within the Zoo, 2008 saw significant growth in our commitment to amphibian conservation. Our dedicated amphibian conservation breeding unit, the A-pod (a converted shipping container) was completed and then used to accommodate the world's only ex situ population of the critically endangered Costa Rican green-eyed frog – known from just one breeding pond on a remote mountain ridge near Monteverde.

Shortly afterwards we received a shipment of 50 similarly threatened Morelet's tree frog from Belize which, in addition to representing an important safety-net population against extinction for the species, are also the study animals for a PhD study jointly supervised by Chester Zoo and Manchester University. The PhD project is to investigate the dietary requirements of tree frogs in long-term conservation breeding programmes.

The A-pod has been so successful in housing our threatened amphibians, that we have now ordered a second unit, which will be delivered during 2009. Purchase of this second A-pod has been entirely funded by a generous donation from the Oglesby Trust.

Chester Zoo has also been supporting and participating in a number of field conservation and research projects for amphibians, most notably in Costa Rica for the same species of Green-eyed frog maintained in our A-pod. This new project is already generating vital conservation information about the species in the wild, and is a project we hope to develop and expand in the coming years

Year of the Frog Campaign

2008 was officially the 'Year of the Frog'. This was a dedicated AARK (see above) conservation campaign run by all of the major national, regional and international zoo associations, including EAZA and WAZA. Chester Zoo staff played a key role in developing, launching and running the campaign on the national and international stage.

The aims of the campaign were;

To generate public awareness and understanding on the amphibian extinction crisis.

To raise funds for implementing the ex situ aspects of the global Amphibian Conservation Action Plan (ACAP).

To encourage zoo and aquarium participation in amphibian ex situ conservation.

To raise awareness and funds to the activities of the Amphibian Ark (AARK).

To position the zoo and aquarium community as leaders in global amphibian conservation.

The temporary, but very impressive, 'Life on the Lily Pad' amphibian display was installed in the Zoo's Joseph Banks Room and was the focal point for our own Year of the Frog activities. Live exhibits of dart frogs, tree frogs, aquatic toads and enigmatic caecilians were combined with colourful and comprehensive interpretation on the global amphibian crisis and the aims of the international campaign.



Animal Health and Welfare

Supporting Strategic Objectives

1 2 3 4

Keeping staff monitor health and welfare of their charges several times a day and the Curatorial and Animal Health Care teams are alerted to any husbandry challenges or health problems that arise. All clinical cases are reviewed weekly and are audited quarterly by the Animal Welfare, Conservation and Scientific Committee – a committee of the Zoo's Council.

The Animal Health Care team provides a round the clock service and comprises of three veterinary surgeons, two vet nurses, a nutritionist and an endocrinologist. They are also supported by both veterinary and human medical specialists and the team has particularly close collaborative links with Liverpool University Veterinary School.

Preventing disease is at the heart of the Zoo's animal health care program and involves monitoring of an animal health from the moment it is born or arrives to the moment it leaves or dies.

Over 100 consignments of animals were moved in 2008. As well as the logistics of arranging safe transport for these animals, animal health certificates must be obtained and regulations upheld, a process that is managed by the Zoo's Registrar. On arrival, the animals are all quarantined and tested for relevant diseases before they enter the collection.

Health monitoring continues regularly throughout the animal's life and includes routine faecal testing to check for parasites (over 1,000 samples were examined by our vet nurses in 2008) and also opportunistic screening of apparently healthy animals for exposure to important diseases. In addition, any animals that are sick or have died undergo a detailed examination. Collation and analysis of these data enables us to determine the disease status of the collection and hence target our control programs more effectively.

Health monitoring does not stop at the Zoo's boundaries. We keep an eye on the national and international disease status also. Zoo staff work closely with DEFRA, BIAZA, the British Veterinary Zoological Society (BVZS) and British Veterinary Association (BVA) to help shape government policy on how potential disease outbreaks in UK zoos will be managed and to help formulate bio-security and vaccination guidelines for the zoo community as a whole.

The Animal Health Care Team, as well as providing health care to our own animals, is now beginning to grow our external consultancy. For instance our Endocrine Laboratory offers a diagnostic service both to other zoos and to wildlife researchers and 2009 will see the launch of its own website as a means of supporting health care and diversifying our income stream.

Husbandry

The continual advances in husbandry standards and skills within the organisation are perhaps best demonstrated by highlighting just some of the significant births and hatchings during 2008:

Our first breeding of Northern Babirusa. Although we have kept the species for over nine years, this was the first piglet to be born here.

The hatching and rearing of Critically Endangered Radiated Tortoises, believed to be a UK first.

The first Hyacinth Macaw chick to be parent-reared at the Zoo.

The growth of our flock of Chilean Flamingos to over 100 birds with the hatching and rearing of fifteen chicks during the year.

Our first breeding of Timor Sparrows, a species new to the collection during 2007.

The successful hand-rearing of a female Rothschild's Giraffe (the rarest subspecies). Margaret was the first calf born to six-year old Fay and, at 34 kilos, was one of the smallest calves ever seen. Our dedicated keeping staff cared for her around the clock for several months until she was feeding well and growing steadily.

Regular husbandry and welfare reviews undertaken by the animal and veterinarian teams help focus our efforts on the highest priority issues. This enabled us work together to solve complex problems – such as why our Asiatic lioness was not rearing her own cubs. Subsequent adaptation of our husbandry practices to cater for her specific needs led to her rearing cub Chakra and then both mother and cub being re-integrated with the male lion.

Advocacy and capacity-building

As well as providing optimal care for the animals in the collection, Zoo staff have a duty to disseminate information on best husbandry practice and animal health. This is done in a variety of ways including publication of scientific papers, presentations at conferences and organisation and participation in work shops and training programs. Highlights for 2008 include:

Hosting of the 5th European Zoo Nutrition Conference which was attended by over 100 participants from 19 countries.

Running a Wildlife Endocrinology Training Workshop in Brazil conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution. This training course consisted of 2 days of lectures (100 participants), 3 days of practical labs (40 participants) and the establishment of an endocrine laboratory in-country so that participants could put the skills they learnt into immediate action.

Providing a week long training programme in animal health and husbandry for 3 senior personnel from Baghdad Zoo, Iraq.

Chester Zoo's Veterinary Officer continued his role as the Veterinary Co-ordinator for the Pan African Sanctuary Alliance (PASA), facilitating projects aimed at improving the understanding and mitigating effects of disease on the conservation of African primate populations. Activities include organising annual African-based veterinary workshops, publishing user-friendly manuals, veterinary/keeper exchanges and international veterinary networking.

Zoo staff work on both a local, national and international levels, by engaging in dialogue with policy makers, coordinating breeding programs, undertaking research and providing health and husbandry advice to both *in-situ* and *ex-situ* conservation projects. One example of this is the setting up of the European Group for Zoo Animal Contraception (EGZAC) in close association with the American Zoo Association (AZA) Contraception Advisory Group.

Animal support services

Another important factor in the maintenance of the highest standards of animal health and welfare is the work of the Animal Supplies Department (ASD), which fulfils a wide variety of duties, all of which underpin the provision of optimal animal care and nutrition.

A key function is the provision of foodstuffs (home-grown, home-bred and purchased). Food prices have escalated by over 25% in the last two years due to changes in the global economic climate and poor weather affecting harvests. In response to this, the ASD is working closely with the animal and accounts teams to purchase as efficiently as possible and to minimise wastage. In addition we are building a dedicated cold store in 2009 to allow us to take advantage of bulk purchasing.

Other services provided by this important department include management of animal bedding and waste, pest control, coordination of the emergency response team, care of animals in quarantine. Animal operations would grind to a halt without all of this vital 'behind the scenes' work.

In-Zoo Science and Research

Supporting Strategic Objectives

2 3 4

An increasing number of scientific studies are carried out, both in the Zoo and in the field, by Chester Zoo staff as principle investigators, active collaborators or academic supervisors. This extends over several divisions and includes research in many disciplines, including animal behaviour and welfare, veterinary issues, animal nutrition, endocrinology, marketing, education and visitor studies, taxonomy and genetics, as well as field-conservation research, including areas of human/wildlife conflict, and investigations relating to UK native species. In addition, zoo staff are engaged in research training, the supervision and examination of university research projects for first and higher-level degrees and have helped produce the EAZA Research Strategy for European Zoos.

In 2008, in-Zoo research supervised by our staff included the continuation of a study of the short- and long-term behavioural and physiological responses to relocation in a female Asian elephant. Zoo staff members, in collaboration with colleagues from the University of Manchester, are also involved in a PhD project to investigate the role of diet and light on the fitness and fecundity of South American tree frogs, funded by a Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) Co-operative Award in Sciences of the Environment (CASE) and an NEZS Conservation and Research Grant. NEZS is also supporting another PhD project, evaluating the impact on population health and reproduction in the European *ex-situ* black rhinoceros population, in collaboration with the University of Liverpool. This project is funded by another NERC CASE award and an NEZS Conservation and Research Grant and it forms part of the NEZS Black Rhino Conservation Programme. An investigation was also carried out into the effects on blue poison-dart frog behaviour of varying the feeding schedules and techniques, to encourage the frogs to spend more time foraging. Several Zoo staff members are also carrying out research towards their own Masters' or PhD theses, including work on adrenal activity in zoo-housed Asian elephants, the taxonomic status of the Ecuadorian Amazon parrot, a behavioural and endocrinological investigation into the welfare of captive Colombian black spider monkeys, jaguar - human conflict in Latin America, and a study of the changing perspective of education provision in zoos. Many Zoo staff also co-ordinate zoo breeding-programmes,

manage studbooks, write and review scientific papers and reports, participate in various scientific animal-management and conservation committees for internal and external bodies and present their work at national and international conferences and workshops. During 2008, Chester Zoo staff and associates published or contributed to over 80 scientific, biological and technical publications (see Appendices for a list of some of these key publications).

Several of our staff members are recognized by Honorary positions within academic institutions, including the Universities of Chester and Liverpool. The NEZS also awarded several new 'Honorary Fellowships' of its own in 2008, in recognition of outstanding scientific contributions by key individuals to conservation, animal welfare and education-related research undertaken in collaboration with NEZS, both in the field and at the Zoo. Research collaborations with our key partners help us in our mission to conserve biodiversity worldwide.

In 2008, 117 approved projects by 119 visiting researchers from 22 institutions were carried out at the Zoo. 70% of these researchers were based at Universities and Colleges in North West England and North Wales. Most of these projects focused on animal behaviour and gave students the opportunity for scientific training: 17% of projects were conducted towards postgraduate degrees and almost 82% towards first degrees (with the rest being towards vocational qualifications or projects conducted by professional academic researchers). In addition, the Zoo also co-ordinates many projects involving the supply of biological material (80 requests for opportunistic supply of biological material were received this year, approximately 50% of which we have been able to fulfil). Much support has been rendered to the international Frozen Ark (gene-banking and cryo-preservation) conservation and research project, of which Chester Zoo is a consortium member and the Director General a Trustee.

In the 2008 British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA) Awards scheme, Chester Zoo was delighted to be awarded a commendation for research undertaken by our staff, concentrating on improving the design and use of interpretation in 'Realm of the Red Ape' exhibit. The Zoo was also honoured to receive the 2008 BIAZA Meritorious Award in the category of Best Research Project, for PhD research carried out at the Zoo on 'Reconciliation, consolation and relationship quality in chimpanzees.' In addition to the award, this research, by a graduate student from Liverpool John Moore's University, has resulted in several peer-reviewed publications and international media interest. Such projects, as well as our research conducted outside the Zoo (and awards gained for this), highlight the value of high quality research undertaken by visiting researchers and Zoo staff.

Chester Zoo aims to be at the forefront of animal welfare and husbandry both within collections and our in-situ conservation activities. Maintaining these high standards is very much a team effort.

Discovery and Learning

Supporting Strategic Objectives

1 2 3 4

Everything we do in Discovery and Learning now focuses on delivering our six 'Key Conservation Messages' to target audiences. We find this framework extremely useful for developing new activities and checking that existing ones are sufficiently in tune with our mission and vision.

Our Key Conservation Messages

INTERDEPENDENCE - All living things, including humans, live in ecosystems and depend on other living things for their survival.

IMPORTANCE - We depend on the natural world for our own survival and it can be beautiful, fun, inspiring and amazing too.

DESTRUCTION - Human activities are causing serious environmental damage which may ultimately threaten our own survival as a species

PARTNERSHIPS - Chester Zoo works in partnership with other organizations to conserve nature and natural resources

CHESTER ZOO - Chester Zoo is a charity whose mission is to be a major force in conserving biodiversity worldwide

YOU! - Zoos have a vital role to play in informing, inspiring and empowering individuals to make changes that will impact positively on the environment

We continue to be a major education provider for the region with 111,557 students/pupils visiting in education groups during the year, 28,337 of these being directly taught by our education team and others in the Zoo. The importance of zoos in providing this learning opportunity was highlighted in an article Stephen McKeown was invited to write for a website promoting 'Learning outside the classroom' promoted by the Department of Children, Schools and Families.

Part of our commitment in providing educational opportunities is that we should be as inclusive as possible. We were therefore delighted that a substantial bid we submitted to the National Lottery to fund a project promoting our conservation messages to single parent families was successful. Families come to the Zoo to engage in arts and craft activities and we hope they are inspired to return to their communities and further spread our messages.

Just under 0.5 million visitors attended our Presenter talks in 2008, with the most popular talks being sealions, tigers and elephants. All Presenter talks are carefully designed to deliver particular messages about, for example our overseas work or conservation breeding programmes.

Reinaldo Niebles, an educational psychologist and Head of Education at Colombia's Barranquilla Zoo, visited us to

exchange ideas and gain some experience of what we do here in Discovery and Learning. Reinaldo also participated in the Visitor Studies Group 10th Anniversary Summer School and Conference hosted by us. 44 delegates from around 30 diverse organizations attended and shared information on the latest research.

In his capacity as President of the International Zoo Educators' Association, Chester Zoo's Head of Discovery and Learning Stephen McKeown was invited to give two presentations at the Brazilian Zoo Association Conference in Sorocaba and also attended the 19th Biennial Conference of IZE and 63rd Annual Conference of WAZA in Adelaide, Australia.

Chester Zoo's Lead Presenter, visited Limbe Wildlife Centre in Cameroon for ten days on a Keeper-for-a-Day funded trip. The main aim was to run a training programme on public education using her experiences of giving presentations and speaking with visitors at Chester Zoo. This was attended by all the keeping staff, the vet, education staff and volunteer guides. Staff also assisted in developing interpretation panels, ecology presentations and more effective guided tours.

Junior Members' Summer School

The 29 Juniors who were lucky enough to get a place on this year's Junior Member Summer School event in August had an absolutely wonderful time!

Without exception, the youngsters were extremely appreciative of the effort put in by all the staff who gave up some time to tell them about what they do here. We had an absolutely 'buzzing' group of teenagers, who thoroughly enjoyed themselves, had great fun, and just loved being in the Zoo and finding out about the things that happen here. They all left with answers to the hundreds of questions that they asked the Keepers on their behind-the-scenes visits. And lots of excellent messages about the wide range of topics we covered, such as:

Why Zoos?

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Animal Welfare | Animal Records |
| Zoo Breeding Programmes and the wider zoo community | |
| Zoo Botany - cultivation and conservation | |
| Zoo Enclosure Design | Outreach Conservation |
| Live Mammal Trapping | Re-introductions |
| Native Species Projects | Dormouse Box making |
| Environmental Enrichment | Animal Behaviour and Research |
| Endocrinology and its use in Zoos | |
| Tour of the Vet Hospital and new quarantine facility | |
| Careers in Veterinary Medicine, Vet Nursing, Zoo Keeping, Animal Presenters, Education | |

Plus we had a lovely day out at Wepre Country Park where after a fabulous guided walk through the ancient woodland and a climb up through the ruins of Ewloe Castle, the Juniors set to some strenuous work removing Ragwort from the golf course!

This experience will undoubtedly help our Junior Members to focus on future careers and promote their already existing interest in our Zoo, other Zoos and Conservation in general. They are already a very knowledgeable bunch of youngsters, with a great deal of enthusiasm and we hope that we have fuelled that and encouraged them to develop this interest through the Summer School.

New Developments at the Zoo in 2008

Supporting Strategic Objectives

1 2 4 5

Alasdair McNee –
Director of Corporate Services

2008 was a year of innovative projects that take us in new and exciting areas of the animal collection and the visitor experience. As ever, cross-directorate support for infrastructure and maintenance projects for animals, guests and staff remains crucial.

2008 saw the delivery on-time and on-budget of many new exciting physical development projects and continued our commitment to continually improve facilities for animals and services to visitors. Animal welfare is at the forefront of all new developments, so we continually invest in improving existing enclosures, as well as provide new ones for species new to the collection.

The year saw the return of Cheetahs to the collection after an absence of more than ten years. Four males of the northern form were introduced to a brand new exhibit in the 'Asian Steppe' area of the Zoo. As well as stunning elevated views from the new bridge, visitors can get a close-up view of the cats from the themed 'Yurt' building. The males will be joined by females in this breeding enclosure during 2009.

Our Chilean and Caribbean Flamingos moved into their new winter facilities, which provide them with more spacious accommodation during winter days when the lake is frozen, and allow us to further expand the flock sizes.

One end of the Tropical Realm was transformed with the opening of the heavily themed and planted Philippine Crocodile enclosure.

Towards the end of the year, 'Butterfly Journey' – the largest zoo-based butterfly house in the UK - was opened informally (with the formal opening scheduled for 2009). It is home to several hundred butterflies of more than thirty of the world's most impressive and colourful species.

Another major project included the completion in May of the new wooden 'Cat Walk' bridge linking the East and West sides of the Zoo and providing panoramic views. Other service and infrastructure projects included the upgrade of the tarmac on access roads to the overflow car park, a new standby generator to service the Cedar House Administration building and the upgrade of new satellite Forage Storage Facilities for animal feed. Our on-site effluent treatment plant has been upgraded and extended to meet and surpass the Environmental Agency discharge regulations concerning paddock drainage and increased visitor numbers.

The original design for Cedar House to ensure maximum office space included the potential to develop the extensive roof space. The first phase of this was successfully realised in April 2008 when the Estates Division moved into their new home, located above the reception area with new access stairs and storage facilities.

Work also commenced on the Tsavo African Bird Safari and Otter and Babirusa exhibit. Both will be open to visitors in early 2009.



Health, Safety & Environmental Management

Supporting Strategic Objectives

5 6

Health and Safety

Regulatory management of the monorail has transferred from the Local Authority Environmental Health Office to the Railway Inspectorate this year. This has resulted in a legal requirement to develop a Safety Management System, which comprises of detailed risk assessments and procedures to ensure the safe operation of the monorail. This new requirement has coincided with a scheduled upgrade of the Monorail and has required significant input from across a number of Zoo departments, including Health and Safety.

New Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Regulations came into force in April, and a series of training events took place to inform management and Trustees of this new and significant piece of legislation.

Total Accidents

| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Visitors | 318 | 359 | 208 | 189 | 110 | 283 | 249 |
| Staff | 105 | 116 | 109 | 76 | 76 | 112 | 115 |
| Total | 432 | 475 | 317 | 265 | 186 | 395 | 364 |

HSE Reportable Accidents

| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
|-----------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Visitors | 7 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Staff | 4 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| Total | 11 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 8 | 4 |

N.B. Frost Fair accident statistics are not included in these figures

ISO 14001

In June, the Zoo achieved national recognition for its Environmental Management System when it was awarded runner-up in the Public Sector category of the British Standards Institute (BSI) / Institute of Environmental Management and Auditing (IEMA) Awards 2008. It was particularly satisfying as this is a prestigious award with a high number of quality submissions.

The Zoo's Environmental Management system was subject to the annual verification audit in October by external verifiers, as required as part of our ISO14001 accreditation. This was successfully achieved and noted a number of key improvements, including the progress made in energy management.

Energy Management

Energy conservation and efficiency, is an increasingly important aspect of our operations. A comprehensive plan was developed in 2008 and is now demonstrating significant energy savings. A site-wide energy audit was undertaken identifying areas for improvement. Revising operational practice and exploiting the use of best available technologies were used to drive down energy usage.

Meetings were also held with key staff members to re-assess the ambient temperature requirements across a range of exhibits.

Heating, ventilation and water filtration systems are a major part of total energy use, and have therefore been targeted for performance improvement. Equipment controls were optimised and by the innovative use of air quality monitors and digital controls, energy consumption was demand-matched precisely to need.

Works have been completed at the Elephants and Jaguar exhibits and most recently the Penguin Pool water treatment plant has been optimised in engineering terms. The table below shows the financial savings achieved to date at these locations, in addition to the reduction in carbon emissions.

Table of Projected savings, based on pro-rata savings evidenced in 2008

| Location & Application | KW/Hr Savings Yearly | Carbon Savings Kg/CO ² Yearly | £ Savings Yearly |
|---|----------------------|--|------------------|
| Elephant Exhibit – Electricity Use | 160,152 | 68,856 | 17,616 |
| Elephant Exhibit – Gas Use | 107,000 | 22,470 | 4,850 |
| Elephant Exhibit – Total Energy | 267,152 | 91,326 | 22,466 |
| Jaguar Exhibit – Electricity Use | 75,600 | 32,508 | 8,316 |
| Jaguar Exhibit – Gas Use | 138,480 | 26,311 | 5,539 |
| Jaguar Exhibit – Total Energy | 214,080 | 58,819 | 13,855 |
| Penguin Plant – Total Energy | 106,572 | 45,825 | 11,724 |

In addition to energy management, the site is now focusing on other key areas such as water and waste management, with a view to progressing key performance indicators for all three as part of our Environmental Management System and Performance Improvement Plan.

Marketing, Memberships and Adoptions

Supporting Strategic Objectives

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Despite the onset of the 'credit crunch' which impacted the last quarter's trading, total visitation in 2008 reached 1.37m (including under 3s) - the highest on record. This included 112,000 education based visits, two percent higher than 2007.

At the year end there were 31,256 members, slightly above last year. Recorded member visits were 171,000 almost 13% higher than 2007. The seemingly large rise was in part due to better monitoring.

Adopters totalled 5,709 at the end of December, almost 500 lower than the previous year. The decline prompted a review of the adopter's benefits package which was modified part way through the year. As ever, there was a diverse range of positive publicity, generating an advertising equivalent value (AEV) of more than £10 million

Trusts, Grants and Sponsorship

Supporting Strategic Objectives

4 6

Our vital work in conservation, education, science and tourism would not be possible without the generous contributions of our partners, sponsors and donors. Our sincere thanks go to all who have helped to support our work.

During 2008, we received support from a number of grant-making trusts and foundations for our work, much of which was focused on our educational work with children. These included support from the Big Lottery Fund who made possible a new education project working with one parent families called 'Learning Together'. Further Lottery funding came from the Heritage Lottery Fund who supported 'Count Me In!' a two year project with the NEZS and rECOrd running community workshops on local wildlife heritage and training new volunteer recorders. This project was funded in partnership with the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

We would like to thank Biffaward for their support of Butterfly Journey, our new tropical butterfly house, through the Landfill Communities Fund. Overseas conservation programmes have been supported by The Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation, this time for work in Mauritius.

During 2008, corporate support partnerships continued to grow. We were delighted to expand our partnership with the Cheshire Building Society, with the launch of a new Chester Zoo branded junior savings account – 'The Big Cat Junior Saver'. The year also saw both Urenco and Airbus commit to longer-term project funding, continued support from Ecko untd. and M&S Money, as well as the introduction of new corporate supporters and adopters.

Our warm thanks go to all those who have become lifetime supporters, committing to leave a gift to the Zoo in their will enabling us to continue our conservation work at home and abroad. And finally a mention to those who have helped the Society in a variety of different ways during 2008 :

All our many volunteers who give their time and support for free

Stuart Trotter, Rockpool Children's Books

Camera Solutions

Paul Anthony Studios

CPM UK Ltd., Warrington

Cruise nightclub, Chester

Thank You!

Sincere thanks go to all those who have contributed to Chester Zoo during 2008 and in particular to the following major donors and supporters:

Aaron & Partners
Airbus
Arts Council England – North West
Bertram Robson (legacy)
Beryl Hicks (legacy)
Biffaward
Big Lottery Fund
The Briggs Charitable Trust
Cheshire Building Society
Cheshire's Year of Gardens 08
Climate Change Fund for Cheshire and Warrington
Conlon & Sons (Opticians) **Ltd**
Ecko Unltd
Enrichment Technologies
Envirowall
The Eric and Dorothy Leach Charitable Trust
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
Grosvenor Garden Centre
Heritage Lottery Fund
Irene Griffiths (legacy)
Joan Jenkins (legacy)
Leslie W Cook (legacy)
Marks & Spencer Money
The Michael Marks Charitable Trust
North West Development Agency
Oglesby Charitable Trust
The Rt Hon Baroness Rendell of Babergh, CBE
The Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation
Rural Enterprise
Sero Consulting Ltd
Snap Surveys
Urenco UK Limited
W Howard Ltd



Trustees and Advisors

for the year ended 31 December 2008

Trustees elected by the members

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Tony Williams | Chairman |
| Prof Peter Wheeler | Vice chairman |
| Malcolm Ardron | |
| Prof Malcolm Bennett | |
| Neville Chamberlain CBE | |
| Brian Child | |
| Steve Docking | |
| Dr Caroline Evans | |
| Iain Hall | |
| Chris Mahon | |
| Robert Mee | |
| Dr Jeremy Playfer | (Retired 10 June 2008) |
| Dr Judith Skerritt | (Retired 10 June 2008) |

Chief Executive Officer - Director General
Professor Gordon McGregor Reid

Company secretary
Alan Sykes

Principal and registered office
Cedar House, Zoological Gardens,
Caughall Road, Upton by Chester,
Chester, CH2 1LH

Auditors
PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP,
8 Princes Parade, St. Nicholas Place,
Liverpool L3 1QJ

Solicitors
Aaron & Partners, Grosvenor Court,
Foregate Street, Chester, CH1 1HG
Hill Dickinson, 34 Cuppin Street, Chester, CH1 2BN
Walker Smith Way, 26 Nicholas Street,
Chester, CH1 2PQ

Bankers
Barclays Bank PLC, 7th Floor,
1 Marsden Street, Manchester, M2 1HW
Barclays Global Investors Ireland Ltd.,
J P Morgan House, International Financial
Centres Centre, Dublin 1, Ireland

Actuaries
Mercer Human Resource Consulting,
Mercury Court, Tithebarn Street,
Liverpool, L2 2QH

Structure, Governance and Management

The North of England Zoological Society ("the Society") is a registered charity (Number 306077) and a company limited by guarantee (Number 287902), regulated by its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The Society, also known as Chester Zoo, owns a trading subsidiary company, Chester Zoo Enterprises Limited, whose taxable profits are transferred to the Society via Gift Aid.

The Trustees, as a body of charity trustees, and as directors for the purposes of company law, have general control and management of the administration of the Society. They determine the strategic direction and policies of the Society, with consultation and discussion with the Director General of the Society as Chief Executive Officer and his staff who implement policy. Up to 15 Trustees, who must be members of the Society, are elected by the members at the Annual

General Meeting to serve for a maximum of 6 years. Up to 5 more may also be co-opted by the Trustees to serve for a maximum of 15 months. The Trustees hold at least four formal meetings each year, together with an Annual General Meeting and, as necessary, Extraordinary Meetings. The Trustees have delegated aspects of their powers to committees consisting of some of their members, relevant staff and other advisors. These committees report to the Trustees on matters that require their knowledge or approval. The Trustees also receive copies of the full minutes of all committee meetings. The Chairman and Vice Chairman are elected by the Trustees from their current membership, for a period not exceeding three years before re-election for a maximum of one further term not exceeding three years.

Trustees - recruitment

Each year, the Trustees prepare a list of names of members of the Society that they recommend for election to the Trustee board at the annual general meeting. The Chairman and selected Trustees interview nominees wishing to be elected, considering them against the following characteristics:

Do they enthusiastically support the aims of the Society?

What can they meaningfully contribute to the Society?

Do their skills enhance or fill any current gaps in the overall skills of the Trustees as a whole?

Is there a balance in terms of the mix of ethnicity, gender and age that reflects the membership?

Are they eligible by law to fulfil the role of a trustee of a charity?

Careful consideration in the recruitment of Trustees is vital for ensuring there is a balance of expertise and in particular a balance between the scientific skills on one hand and the commercial and business skills on the other. The first is to ensure the scientific activities of the Society fall within the scope of its mission and the second is to ensure the future financial stability and prudent development of the Society.

Trustees – training

The Society sees the relationship between the Executive (the CEO and his team) and the Trustees as fundamental to NEZS success. It is vitally important therefore that the Trustees understand the overall day-to-day operational activities of the Society. To this end, new Trustees are encouraged to complete an induction tour of the Zoo's various divisions, and to discuss with the CEO, Directors and Heads of Division, the role and function of each division, and the part it plays in the fulfilment of the Society's mission.

The relationship between the executive and the Trustees is further enhanced by the formation of ad hoc joint working parties to consider strategic issues. This is seen to not only develop the Trustees' awareness of the activities of the operational arm of the Society, but is also designed to develop the relationship between the Trustee and the executive, management and staff. The combined meeting of Trustees and the executive team at the quarterly meetings of Trustees further enhances this relationship and awareness of operational issues.

Each Trustee is issued with an induction pack on becoming a Trustee that covers their roles and responsibilities and the mission, vision, values, strategy and current plans for the Society. Every Trustee is encouraged to attend an appropriate external training course, covering all aspects of the role and responsibilities of being a charity trustee.

The Trustees, and the standing committee structure at 31 December 2008, are indicated in the table below:

| Committees: | | Conservation & Education | Animal Health, Welfare & Husbandry | Business Operations | Pension Scheme (*) | Remuneration |
|-----------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|--|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Tony Williams | Chairman | | | ✓ | | Chair |
| Prof Peter Wheeler | Vice Chairman | Chair | | | | ✓ |
| Malcolm Ardron | | | | ✓ | | |
| Prof Malcolm Bennett | | Deputy Chair | Chair | | | |
| Neville Chamberlain | | | | Deputy Chair | | |
| Brian Child | | | | ✓ | | |
| Steve Docking | | ✓ | | | | |
| Dr Caroline Evans | | ✓ | | | | |
| Iain Hall | | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Chris Mahon | | ✓ | | | | |
| Robert Mee | | | | Chair | ✓ | ✓ |

(*) An independent Pension Fund committee which requires NEZS involvement. The Trustees nominate 4 persons (2 others being nominated by members of the pension scheme) to act as trustees of The North of England Zoological Society Superannuation Fund Scheme, established to provide pension benefits to employees of the Society.

Financial review

The financial statements have been produced in the format prescribed by the Charity Commission's Statement of Recommended Practice ('SORP 2005').

Incoming resources from visitor-related charitable activities were £11,966,000 (2007: £12,162,000). Resources expended from visitor-related charitable activities were £3,786,000 (2007: £3,430,000) resulting in a surplus from visitor-related charitable activities of £8,180,000 (2007 restated: £8,732,000). These principally comprise visitor admissions to the Zoo, memberships and Gift Aid thereon, monorail and waterbus rides.

Voluntary income, including donations and Gift Aid on visitor admissions to the Zoo, other donations and legacies and Gift Aid thereon, animal adoptions and associated Gift Aid, and grants were £2,783,000 (2007: £2,080,000). This included grants of £486,000 (2007: £nil) from North West Development Agency to assist the development master plan for the Society's Natural Vision project.

The total incoming resources were £22,395,000 (2007: £21,585,00).

The trading surplus of Chester Zoo Enterprises Limited was £485,000 (2007: £103,000) arising from its catering and retail activities.

Resources expended on charitable activities, excluding the visitor-related activities, principally on animal and botanical conservation, including grants payable (principally for outreach activities), increased to £10,139,000 (2007: £9,649,000). This represents an increase of 5.1%. The costs of generating voluntary income were £358,000 (2007: £298,000).

Net outgoing resources for the year, were £200,000 (2007: Net incoming resources £993,000). An actuarial loss on the pension fund of £1,305,000 (2007: £321,000) resulted in a net decrease in funds of £1,505,000 (2007: £672,000

increase) which reduced the accumulated funds carried forward to £23,545,000 (2007: £25,050,000).

The net cash inflow from net incoming resources was £1,872,000 (2007: £4,244,000). Net interest received from cash on deposit was £379,000 (2007: £410,000). This was utilised to fund net capital expenditure of £2,829,000 (2007: £3,261,000) resulting in a net decrease in cash of £578,000 (2007: £1,384,000 increase).

Restricted and designated funds

Restricted income funds derive from the Animal Adoption Scheme and from donations, grants and legacies received. Animal adoption income is fully utilised to purchase animal foods, and the remaining restricted funds are put towards a variety of capital projects and outreach activities.

The designated funds principally relate to the Society's capital expenditure programme for the forthcoming year, and to outreach programmes which the Society commits to support over the next three to five years.

Reserves

The Society's reserves may be defined as that part of its unrestricted income funds that are freely available for its general purposes. It therefore excludes those funds that could only be realised by disposing of fixed assets held for charitable use. It is the general policy of the Society to apply towards its objectives as much cash as it reasonably can, without accumulating excessive reserves. The Trustees do not consider it necessary to retain income in respect of the Society's designated fund activities. Whilst these funds have been earmarked by the Trustees for particular purposes or uses, they are not committed or restricted legally.

The Society must have regard to its substantial continuing commitments, in terms of staffing and of its ongoing charitable objectives, and to the difficulty of predicting its precise income in any year. It must have regard to the annual cyclical swings of cash flow and such variable factors as wet weather at peak visitor times, competing attractions in the region, social trends, support for or opposition to zoos in principle, the potential closure of the zoo to visitors due to contagious disease or other disasters, and varying levels of economic prosperity and employment.

The Trustees consider that reserves at the end of any financial year not exceeding 100% of the total resources expended during the year could properly be regarded as both reasonable and justified. Equally it considers that it would not be prudent to allow such reserves to fall below zero. The Society's reserves at 31 December 2008, as defined above, were £6,106,000 (2007: £7,455,000) which represents 26.7% of total unrestricted resources expended in the year (2007: 36.6%)

Investment policy

Investment powers are limited to those available under the Society's Memorandum of Association and charity legislation.

The Trustees' objective is, in the normal course of events, to maintain the capital value of the Society's investment assets, whilst allowing the Society to withdraw funds as required. Accordingly, the investments are held in highly liquid sterling assets. The performance of the assets is benchmarked against the 7-day and 3-month London Interbank Bid Rate. The Society has not set a policy on social, environmental and ethical considerations, or on corporate governance. The Trustees monitor the investment performance and the appropriateness of this policy on an ongoing basis.

Risk management

The Trustees actively review the major risks that the Society faces on a regular basis both generally and specifically, and believe that maintaining free reserves within the levels indicated above will provide sufficient resources in the event of most adverse conditions. They also monitor the key

financial and internal control systems and examine other operational and business risks to which the Society is exposed and have established systems to mitigate the significant risks identified.

The key potential risks identified by the Trustees are the current economic recession causing running costs to exceed income; failure to change as a business and grow market share; and animal disease causing significant loss of animal stock, restrictions on animal movement, or restrictions on visitor attendance.

The Society's Health and Safety Policy is reviewed annually by the Conservation and Education Committee and by the Trustees to ensure that the Health and Safety Management System remains both current and effective.

Employees

The Society endeavours to ensure that employees are treated fairly and equality of opportunity is afforded to all and that we remain legally compliant with all relevant statutes. Applications for employment by disabled persons are always fully considered, bearing in mind the respective aptitudes and abilities of the applicant. In the event of employees becoming disabled, every effort is made to ensure that where a role is available for which appropriate training can be offered, their Society employment continues. It is the policy of the Society that the training, career development and promotion of a disabled person is, as far as possible, identical to that of a person who does not suffer from a disability.

The Society continues to consult and discuss with its employees, both through the Staff Association and directly to staff (at scheduled and ad-hoc meetings) a wide range of matters, including development of the Society's mission and its current success, performance and challenges. Information is also disseminated by means of a staff website, an in-house newsletter, and the annual Zoo Review. Through this varied and regular provision the NEZS seeks to achieve a common awareness on the part of all employees of the Zoo, of the financial, economic and other factors affecting the Society, as well as progress with its core mission.

Trustees' third party indemnity

The Society purchases liability insurance cover for the Society, its Trustees and other officers which gives them appropriate cover against the consequences of any neglect or default on their part.

The Trustees' responsibilities in respect of the Annual Report and the financial statements

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The Trustees are responsible for preparing financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view, in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, of the state of affairs of the Society and group and of the net incoming or outgoing resources of the Society and group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;

Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;

State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and

Prepare the financial statements on the 'going concern' basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Society will continue to operate.

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the above requirements in preparing the financial statements.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Society and the group and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 1985, the Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities 2005' and the Society's Memorandum and Articles of Association. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Society and the group and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Disclosure of information to auditors

Each of the persons who are Trustees at the date of approval of this report confirms that:

So far as the Trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Society's auditors are unaware;

The Trustee has taken all the steps that he/she ought to have taken as a Trustee in order to make himself/herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Society's auditors are aware of that information.

The confirmation is given and should be interpreted with the provisions of section 234ZA of the Companies Act 1985.

Auditors

The auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, have indicated their willingness to continue in office and a resolution concerning their appointment will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf:

Alan Sykes
Company Secretary

22 April 2009

Independent auditors' report to the members of the North of England Zoological Society

We have audited the group and parent charity financial statements of the North of England Zoological Society for the year ended 31 December 2008 which comprise the Group Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheets, the Group Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies therein.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Auditors

The responsibilities of the Trustees (who are also the directors of The North of England Zoological Society for the purposes of company law) for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) are set out in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities.

Our responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). This report, including the opinion, has been prepared for and only for the charitable company's members as a body in accordance with Section 235 of the Companies Act 1985 and for no other purpose. We do not, in giving this opinion, accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose or to any other person to whom this report is shown or into whose hands it may come save where expressly agreed by our prior consent in writing.

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view and are properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 1985. We also report to you whether, in our opinion, the information given in the Trustees' Report is consistent with the financial statements.

In addition we report to you if, in our opinion, the charitable company has not kept proper accounting records, if we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit, or if information specified by law regarding trustees' remuneration and other transactions is not disclosed.

We read the other information contained in the Annual Report and consider whether it is consistent with the audited financial information. The other information comprises only the Trustees' Report and the information included on page 1.

Basis of audit opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the Trustees in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the group and charitable circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

Opinion

In our opinion:

The financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with United Kingdom generally accepted Accounting Practice, of the state of the affairs of the group's and the parent charitable company as at 31 December 2008 and of the group's incoming resources and application of resources, including the group's income and expenditure, and cash flows for the year then ended;

The financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 1985; and

The information given in the Trustees' Report is consistent with the financial statements.

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP

Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors
Liverpool

22 April 2009

Group statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 December 2008

| | Notes | Unrestricted funds £'000 | Restricted funds £'000 | Total 2008 £'000 | Total 2007 £'000 (as restated) |
|--|-------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Incoming resources | | | | | |
| Incoming resources from charitable activities | | | | | |
| | 2 | | | | |
| Animals and botanical collection | | 11,796 | - | 11,796 | 12,031 |
| Education and Research | | 64 | - | 64 | 43 |
| Incoming resources from generated funds | | | | | |
| Voluntary income | | | | | |
| | 3 | 1,981 | 1,048 | 3,029 | 2,319 |
| Activities for generating funds | | | | | |
| Subsidiary's trading turnover | 4 | 7,015 | - | 7,015 | 6,634 |
| Other | | 52 | - | 52 | 43 |
| Investment income | | | | | |
| | 5 | 379 | - | 379 | 410 |
| Other incoming resources | | | | | |
| Pension finance net income | 20 | 60 | - | 60 | 105 |
| TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES | | 21,347 | 1,048 | 22,395 | 21,585 |
| Resources expended | | | | | |
| Resources expended on charitable activities | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Animals and botanical collection | | 12,032 | 506 | 12,538 | 11,438 |
| Education and Research | | 686 | 38 | 724 | 750 |
| Outreach | | 663 | - | 663 | 722 |
| Costs of generating funds | | | | | |
| Costs of generating voluntary income | | | | | |
| | | 358 | - | 358 | 298 |
| Fundraising trading | | | | | |
| Subsidiary's cost of goods sold and other costs | 4 | 6,530 | - | 6,530 | 6,531 |
| Other | | 6 | - | 6 | 12 |
| Governance costs | | | | | |
| | | 259 | - | 259 | 240 |
| Other resources expended | | | | | |
| Natural Vision expenditure | | 408 | 486 | 894 | 169 |
| Irrecoverable VAT | | 623 | - | 623 | 644 |
| TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED | 6a | 21,565 | 1,030 | 22,595 | 20,804 |
| Net (outgoing)/incoming resources | | | | | |
| before other recognised gains and losses | | | | | |
| | 8 | (218) | 18 | (200) | 781 |
| Other recognised gains and losses | | | | | |
| Profit on sale of tangible fixed assets | | - | - | - | 212 |
| Actuarial loss on defined benefit pension scheme | 20 | (1,305) | - | (1,305) | (321) |
| Net movement in funds | | (1,523) | 18 | (1,505) | 672 |
| Reconciliation of funds | | | | | |
| Total funds brought forward | | 24,854 | 196 | 25,050 | 24,378 |
| Total funds carried forward | | 23,331 | 214 | 23,545 | 25,050 |

Balance sheets as at 31 December 2008

| | Notes | Group | | Society | |
|---|-------|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| | | 2008 £'000 | 2007 £'000 (as restated) | 2008 £'000 | 2007 £'000 (as restated) |
| Fixed assets | | | | | |
| Tangible assets | 11 | 17,225 | 17,399 | 17,123 | 17,324 |
| Investment in subsidiary company | 12 | - | - | - | - |
| | | 17,225 | 17,399 | 17,123 | 17,324 |
| Current assets | | | | | |
| Stocks | 13 | 478 | 426 | 182 | 96 |
| Debtors | 14 | 1,234 | 630 | 1,363 | 712 |
| Short term investments | | 7,519 | 8,140 | 7,519 | 8,140 |
| Cash at bank and in hand | | 874 | 831 | 874 | 831 |
| | | 10,105 | 10,027 | 9,938 | 9,779 |
| Creditors: amounts falling due within one year | 15 | (1,927) | (1,694) | (1,673) | (1,385) |
| Net current assets | | 8,178 | 8,333 | 8,265 | 8,394 |
| Total assets less current liabilities | | 25,403 | 25,732 | 25,388 | 25,718 |
| Net assets before net pension liability | | 25,403 | 25,732 | 25,388 | 25,718 |
| Net pension liability | 20 | (1,858) | (682) | - | - |
| Net assets | | 23,545 | 25,050 | 25,388 | 25,718 |
| Funds employed | | | | | |
| Income funds – restricted | 16 | 214 | 196 | 214 | 196 |
| Income funds – unrestricted | | | | | |
| Designated funds | 16 | 1,938 | 5,059 | 1,938 | 5,059 |
| Pension reserve | 16 | 1,858 | 682 | - | - |
| Other charitable funds | 16 | 19,535 | 19,113 | 23,236 | 20,463 |
| | | 23,331 | 24,854 | 25,174 | 25,522 |
| Total funds employed | 16 | 23,545 | 25,050 | 25,388 | 25,718 |

The financial statements on pages 44 to 59 were approved by the Trustees on 22 April 2009 and signed on their behalf by:

Tony Williams
Chairman of Trustees

Robert Mee
Chairman of Business Operations Committee

Group cash flow statement for the year ended 31 December 2008

| | 2008 £'000 | 2007 £'000 (as restated) |
|---|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Net cash inflow from net (outgoing)/incoming resources | | |
| Net (outgoing) / incoming resources | (200) | 993 |
| Net interest receivable | (379) | (410) |
| Profit on sale of fixed assets | - | (213) |
| Depreciation | 3,178 | 2,973 |
| Increase in stocks | (52) | (31) |
| (Increase) / decrease in debtors | (604) | 620 |
| Increase in creditors due within 1 year | 58 | 363 |
| Difference between pension charge and cash contributions | (129) | (51) |
| | 1,872 | 4,244 |
| Returns on investment and servicing of finance | | |
| Interest received | 379 | 401 |
| Capital expenditure and financial investment | | |
| Receipts from disposal of tangible fixed assets | - | 215 |
| Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets | (2,829) | (3,476) |
| | (2,829) | (3,261) |
| Management of liquid resources | | |
| Decrease / (increase) in short term investments | 621 | (553) |
| Increase in net cash in the year | 43 | 831 |

Analysis of changes in net funds during the year

| | Balance at 1 January 2008 £'000 | Cash flow £'000 | 2007 31 December 2008 £'000 |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Cash | | | |
| Cash at bank and in hand | 831 | 43 | 874 |
| Net cash | 831 | 43 | 874 |

Principal accounting policies

The following accounting policies have been applied in dealing with items that are considered material in relation to the financial statements of The North of England Zoological Society ("the Society"). They are consistent with those adopted in the financial statements for the prior year, except as stated below.

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention and in accordance with applicable accounting standards in the United Kingdom, the Charity Commission's Statement of Recommended Practice 'SORP 2005', the Charities Act 1993 and the Companies Act 1985.

Change in accounting presentation

Short term, highly liquid investments have been reclassified from cash held at bank to current asset investments. There is no impact on net assets as a consequence of this reclassification.

Change in accounting policy

The Society has adopted the amendment to FRS17 'Retirement Benefits'. As a result of this, quoted securities held as plan assets in the deferred benefit pension scheme are now valued at bid price rather than mid-market value. There is no material impact in the current or prior year following adoption of this new accounting policy. As a result the financial statements have not been updated for this change.

Consolidation

The consolidated statement of financial activities (SOFA), consolidated balance sheet and consolidated cash flow statement include the financial statements of the Society and its subsidiary undertaking, Chester Zoo Enterprises Limited, made up to 31 December 2008 and comply with recommended practice for accounting by charities. The results of the subsidiary are consolidated on a line by line basis. The charity has availed itself of paragraph 3(3) of Schedule 4 of the Companies Act 1985 and adapted the Companies Act formats to reflect the special nature of the charity's activities. No separate SOFA has been presented for the charity alone as permitted by Section 230 of the Companies Act 1985 and paragraph 397 of the SORP.

Funds employed

All funds employed must be expended in furtherance of the objects of the Society. Restricted income funds must be used in furtherance of some specific aspect of those objects.

Designated funds are those which have been set aside by the Trustees out of unrestricted funds for identifiable future expenditure, but the designation has an administrative purpose only and does not legally restrict the Trustees' discretion to apply the funds.

Incoming resources

In accordance with the SORP, all incoming resources, including Gift Aid, becoming receivable by the Society during the year are recognised in the SOFA, regardless of their source or of the purpose to which they are to be put or have been put. The one exception to this is membership income and the associated Gift Aid which is treated as deferred income to the extent that it relates to a service to be provided in the following financial year and is potentially refundable.

Where income is restricted to a specific purpose, as specified by a donor, the income is included in restricted funds. Legacies are recognised when payment is received or assets transferred. Grants are recognised when there is entitlement, conditions have been met, and there is certainty of receipt.

Resources expended

The Society's systems analyse expenses departmentally. Expenditure is recognised when a liability is incurred, and is allocated in accordance with the main activity of the staff concerned or the substance of the costs incurred, including expenditure on charitable activities and on generating funds, and departments providing support services.

Support costs such as management and administration, information technology and property maintenance are incurred in support of activities undertaken to meet the objects of the Society. In accordance with the SORP, support costs have been allocated to charitable activities and fundraising, apportioned by usage according to relative cost driving activities.

VAT

Visitor admission income is treated as VAT exempt and accordingly, as a partially exempt body, the Society may not recover all VAT incurred on costs, with the exception of VAT incurred in connection with the catering, retail, and seasonal event operations, which operate through the trading subsidiary. The cost of irrecoverable VAT is disclosed separately on the SOFA under other resources expended.

Investments in subsidiary undertakings

These are included at cost less any provision for impairment.

Fixed assets

These are included in the balance sheet at historic purchase cost less accumulated depreciation.

Freehold properties

Depreciation is provided on freehold properties excluding land at 2% or 10% per annum. Freehold land is not depreciated.

Special buildings, enclosures, equipment and monorail system

Depreciation is provided at rates varying between 4% and 25% per annum, estimated to write off each asset over the term of its useful life. The rates and method of depreciation are consistent with those used in previous years.

Animals

No annual assessment is made of the value of the animal collection. It is valued consistently at a nominal sum and not depreciated. Purchases and sales during the year are treated as revenue transactions.

Leases

Where the Society enters into a lease which entails taking substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership of an asset, the lease is treated as a finance lease. The asset is recorded in the balance sheet as a fixed asset and is depreciated over its estimated useful life. Future instalments under such leases, net of finance charges, are included within creditors. Rentals payable are apportioned between the finance element, which is charged to the SOFA as interest, and the capital element, which reduces the outstanding obligation for future instalments. All other leases are operating leases and the rental charges are taken to the SOFA as incurred.

Stocks

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and estimated net realisable value. Where necessary, provision is made for obsolete, slow moving and defective stocks.

Pensions

The Society operates two voluntary pension schemes.

1. The Society makes contributions to a defined contribution pension scheme for certain staff members. The cost of these contributions is charged to the SOFA when incurred.

2. The Society also operates a defined benefit pension scheme to provide benefits to certain staff members based on final pensionable pay. This pension scheme is closed to new members. The assets of the scheme are held in trustee-administered funds completely independent of the Society's finances.

The cost of benefits accruing during the year in respect of current and past service is included within staff costs. The net aggregate value of the investment return on the scheme's assets and the increase in the present value of the scheme's liabilities, arising from the passage of time, are included in the SOFA in either other incoming resources or in other resources expended. Actuarial gains and losses are recognised in the net movement in funds in the SOFA.

The balance sheet includes the deficit in the defined benefit scheme taking assets at their year end market values and liabilities at their actuarially calculated values discounted at the current rate of return on a high quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liability.

In respect of the unconsolidated Society accounts, contributions made to the defined benefit scheme during the year cannot be identified on a consistent and reasonable basis, as two employers participate in the scheme, and as such contributions made to the scheme during the year have been accounted for as if they were to a defined contribution scheme and charged to the profit and loss account as incurred.

Grant-making

Liabilities relating to grants are recognised once the Society is irrevocably committed to the provision of the grant.

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2008

1 Status

The Society is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. Members have guaranteed the liabilities of the Society to the extent of £1 each in the event of the charity being wound up. The Society is registered with the Charity Commission Number 306077. As a registered charity, the Society is entitled to claim exemption from the charge to tax on income and chargeable gains in Section 505 Income and Corporation Tax Act 1988 and Section 256 Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992. Any commercial activity which falls outside the statutory exemption for the purposes of corporation tax is conducted through Chester Zoo Enterprises Limited, which transfers all its taxable profits annually to the Society via Gift Aid. In the opinion of the Trustees, no corporation tax liability arose in respect of the Society's activities in the year.

2 Incoming resources from charitable activities

| | Visitor related £'000 | Other Unrestricted £'000 | Other Designated £'000 | 2008 Total £'000 | 2007 Total £'000 (as restated) |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Animals and botanical collection | | | | | |
| Visitor admission to Zoo and gardens | 9,869 | - | - | 9,869 | 10,138 |
| Monorail and boats | 494 | - | - | 494 | 520 |
| Membership of Zoo and Gift Aid thereon | 1,246 | - | - | 1,246 | 1,193 |
| Other income | 48 | 93 | 46 | 187 | 180 |
| | 11,657 | 93 | 46 | 11,796 | 12,031 |
| Education and Research | 63 | 1 | - | 64 | 43 |
| Total incoming resources from charitable activities | 11,720 | 94 | 46 | 11,860 | 12,074 |

3 Voluntary income

Voluntary income includes donations and gift aid on admissions to the zoo, donations and legacies, animal adoptions and grants received. This includes £486,000 (2007: £Nil) of funding received from North West Development Agency for the Natural Vision Project, details of which are summarised in the Trustees report.

4 Activities for generating funds – Trading by subsidiary company

The Society has a wholly owned trading subsidiary, Chester Zoo Enterprises Limited, incorporated in the UK (representing an investment of £100 in ordinary £1 shares), which operates the catering and retail activities of the Zoo from outlets rented from the Society, and certain seasonal events. It transfers its taxable profit via Gift Aid to the Society. A summary of its trading results is shown below.

Audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2008 will be filed with the Registrar of Companies. Its aggregate assets, liabilities and funds at the year end were £479,001, £463,989 and £15,012 respectively.

| Chester Zoo Enterprises Limited trading results | Catering £'000 | Shops £'000 | Seasonal Events £'000 | 2008 Total £'000 | 2007 Total £'000 |
|--|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Incoming resources - Turnover | 4,081 | 2,633 | 301 | 7,015 | 6,634 |
| Resources expended | | | | | |
| Direct costs | | | | | |
| Labour and cost of goods sold | | | | (5,074) | (5,089) |
| Operating overhead costs | | | | (80) | (186) |
| Gross trading surplus/ (deficit) for year | | | | 1,861 | 1,359 |
| Indirect costs | | | | | |
| Operating and support costs paid to Society | | | | (822) | (724) |
| Property rents paid to Society | | | | (554) | (532) |
| Net trading surplus for year | | | | 485 | 103 |
| Other costs | | | | | |
| Interest received from Society | | | | (47) | 23 |
| Amount transferred to Society via Gift Aid | | | | (437) | (119) |
| Amount retained in subsidiary | | | | 1 | 7 |

Turnover of £7,015,000 is included in the consolidated statement of financial activities within Activities for generating funds – Subsidiary's trading turnover. Direct and indirect costs of £6,530,000 are included within Fundraising trading – Subsidiary's cost of goods sold and other costs.

5 Investment income

| | 2008 Total £'000 | 2007 Total £'000 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Income from short term investments | 373 | 399 |
| Bank interest receivable | 6 | 11 |
| Total investment income | 379 | 410 |

6a Analysis of total resources expended

| | Staff Costs £'000 | Other Direct Costs £'000 | Support Costs £'000 | 2008 Total £'000 | 2007 Total £'000 |
|--|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Resources expended on charitable activities | | | | | |
| Animals and botanical collection | 4,078 | 6,561 | 1,899 | 12,538 | 11,438 |
| Education and Research | 337 | 181 | 206 | 724 | 750 |
| Outreach | 161 | 473 | 29 | 663 | 722 |
| Total for charity | 4,576 | 7,215 | 2,134 | 13,925 | 12,910 |
| Costs of generating funds | | | | | |
| Costs of generating voluntary income | 102 | 124 | 132 | 358 | 298 |
| Fundraising trading | - | 6 | - | 6 | 12 |
| Total for charity | 102 | 130 | 132 | 364 | 310 |
| Subsidiary's cost of goods sold and other costs | 1,900 | 3,808 | 822 | 6,530 | 6,531 |
| Total for group | 2,002 | 3,938 | 954 | 6,894 | 6,841 |
| Governance Costs | 184 | 75 | - | 259 | 240 |
| Other resources expended | | | | | |
| Natural Vision expenditure | - | 894 | - | 894 | 169 |
| Irrecoverable VAT | - | 623 | - | 623 | 644 |
| Total resources expended for charity | 4,862 | 8,937 | 2,266 | 16,065 | 14,273 |
| Total resources expended for group | 6,762 | 12,745 | 3,088 | 22,595 | 20,804 |

Resources expended on the charitable activity of animals and botanical collection includes costs associated with marketing, administration of Society membership, and provision of guest services and amenities of £3,786,129 (2007: £3,430,312).

Education includes costs of direct teaching, and costs of producing interpretative and interactive models and signage related to the animals and botanical collection, as well as supporting publication of International Zoo News.

Outreach includes grant-making, administration of grant-making processes and monitoring of related outcomes.

Costs of generating voluntary income comprise costs of the fundraising department, including administrative salaries, costs of appeal mailshots, inserts and e-mails, collection of authority to collect Gift Aid on Zoo admission fees and donations, and administration and recognition costs related to the Animal Adoption Scheme.

Governance costs include those costs incurred in the governance of the charity and its assets and are primarily associated with constitutional and statutory requirements.

6b Analysis of support costs

| | 2008 Total £'000 | 2007 Total £'000 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Staff costs | 1,796 | 1,540 |
| Other costs | 1,292 | 1,340 |
| Total of support costs | 3,088 | 2,880 |

Support costs have been allocated to the activities set out in note 6a on the basis of their usage of cost driving activities attributable to each support service, as follows:

| Support cost breakdown by activity | Animals and botanical collection £'000 | Education and Research £'000 | Outreach £'000 | Generating voluntary income £'000 | Subsidiary £'000 | Total £'000 |
|---|---|---|---------------------------|--|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Personnel, Payroll Office & Reception | 175 | 22 | 4 | 17 | 121 | 339 |
| Information Technology | 159 | 21 | 4 | 16 | 109 | 309 |
| Directorate and Central Services | 499 | 63 | 12 | 49 | 229 | 852 |
| Finance Department | 123 | 11 | - | 17 | 87 | 238 |
| Cash Office | 54 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 33 | 99 |
| Security & Facilities | 171 | 9 | 2 | 25 | 104 | 311 |
| Maintenance Department | 419 | 77 | 6 | - | 139 | 641 |
| Estates & Project Planning | 299 | - | - | - | - | 299 |
| Total | 1,899 | 206 | 29 | 132 | 822 | 3,088 |

7 Grants payable in furtherance of the charity's objects

The Society makes institutional grants payable in furtherance of the charity's objects, for conservation outreach, research and animal welfare projects.

| Support cost | Grants to institutions £'000 | Grants to individuals £'000 | 2008 Total £'000 | 2007 Total £'000 |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Studentships | 1 | 7 | 8 | 6 |
| Conservation programmes | 398 | 47 | 445 | 392 |
| Education grants | 35 | - | 35 | 33 |
| Other grants | 47 | - | 47 | 75 |
| Total grants payable | 481 | 54 | 535 | 506 |

8 Net (outgoing) / incoming resources before other recognised gains and losses

| | 2008 Total £'000 | 2007 Total £'000 |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| This is after charging : | | |
| Services provided by the Society's auditors | | |
| Fees payable for the audit of the charity and consolidated accounts | 12 | 12 |
| Fees payable for the audit of the subsidiary | 6 | 6 |
| Depreciation of tangible fixed assets | 3,178 | 2,974 |
| Operating lease charges – plant and equipment | 4 | 3 |

9 Trustees' remuneration

The Trustees, being charity trustees, received no remuneration (2007: £nil). No trustees (2007: one) were reimbursed during the year for travelling expenses necessarily incurred.

Insurance costing £1,706 (2007: £1,706) has been taken out by the Society to protect the Society, its trustees and other officers against the consequences of any neglect or default on their part.

10 Employee costs

| | 2008 Total £'000 | 2007 Total £'000 |
|--|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Wages and salaries cost | 7,417 | 7,055 |
| Social security cost | 658 | 625 |
| Pension cost | | |
| Defined Benefit pension scheme, including Life Assurance (note 20) | 463 | 449 |
| Defined Contribution pension scheme | 21 | 15 |
| Total employee costs | 8,559 | 8,144 |

The number of employees, including those employed for only part of the year, whose emoluments for the year (excluding pension contributions) fell within each band of £10,000 from £60,000 upwards is shown below. These employees also had benefits accruing to them under the Society's defined benefit pension scheme.

| | 2008 Number | 2007 Number |
|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| From £80,001 to £90,000 | 1 | 1 |
| From £60,001 to £70,000 | 3 | 2 |

The average number of persons (full time equivalents (FTE)) employed by the Society during the financial year was as follows:

| | 2008 Number | 2007 Number |
|---|------------------------|----------------|
| Animals and botanical collection | 190 | 181 |
| Education & Research | 18 | 21 |
| Outreach | 4 | 4 |
| Fundraising | | |
| Society | 6 | 6 |
| Subsidiary trading | 110 | 110 |
| Support & Governance | 64 | 61 |
| Total FTE employees | 392 | 383 |

11 Tangible fixed assets

| | Freehold property £'000 | Buildings and enclosures £'000 | Machinery and equipment £'000 | Animals £'000 | Total £'000 |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---|--|------------------|----------------|
| Cost | | | | | |
| At 1 January 2008 | 3,158 | 26,192 | 1,776 | 1 | 31,127 |
| Additions | 181 | 2,504 | 319 | - | 3,004 |
| Disposals & retirements | - | (1,765) | (803) | - | (2,568) |
| At 31 December 2008 | 3,339 | 26,931 | 1,292 | 1 | 31,563 |
| Depreciation | | | | | |
| At 1 January 2008 | 1,274 | 11,406 | 1,048 | - | 13,728 |
| Provided during the year | 264 | 2,570 | 344 | - | 3,178 |
| Disposals & retirements | - | (1,765) | (803) | - | (2,568) |
| At 31 December 2008 | 1,538 | 12,211 | 589 | - | 14,338 |
| Net book value | | | | | |
| At 31 December 2008 | 1,801 | 14,720 | 703 | 1 | 17,225 |
| At 31 December 2007 | 1,884 | 14,786 | 728 | 1 | 17,399 |

The Trustees consider that the Society holds no fixed assets for investment purposes. Whilst some of the fixed assets do yield a rental income, they were not acquired for that purpose but to facilitate the operation of the Zoo, which is the primary charitable purpose of the Society.

Assets of the Monorail system, included within Machinery and Equipment, with a cost of £1,174,000 and a net book value of £nil are held under a peppercorn rent finance lease.

The Trustees consider that it is not meaningful to consider the market value of most of the Society's land and buildings. Such assets are necessary to the operation of the Zoo, which is the primary charitable purpose of the Society. Where an assessment can be made, the Trustees consider that the market value exceeds the book value.

Animal purchases of £8,993 (2007: £1,746) and sales of £nil (2007: £nil) have been treated as revenue transactions.

All the tangible fixed assets included in the consolidated statement above relate entirely to the Society with the exception of the machinery and equipment where the equivalent figures for the Society alone are:

| Society – machinery and equipment | Cost £'000 | Depreciation £'000 | Net book value £'000 |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| At 1 January 2008 | 1,616 | (964) | 652 |
| Additions | 256 | - | 256 |
| Disposals | (766) | 766 | - |
| Provided during year | - | (307) | (307) |
| At 31 December 2008 | 1,106 | (505) | 601 |

12 Investments

Society – machinery and equipment

| | Society 2008 £ | 2007 £ |
|---|----------------------|-----------|
| Investment in Chester Zoo Enterprises Limited | 100 | 100 |

13 Stocks

| | Group | | Society | |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | 2008 £'000 | 2007 £'000 | 2008 £'000 | 2007 £'000 |
| Goods for resale | 383 | 302 | 108 | - |
| Consumables | 95 | 124 | 74 | 96 |
| Total | 478 | 426 | 182 | 96 |

The replacement cost of the above stocks would not be significantly different from the values stated.

14 Debtors: amounts falling due within one year

| | Group | | Society | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | 2008 £'000 | 2007 £'000 | 2008 £'000 | 2007 £'000 |
| Trade debtors | 107 | 81 | 70 | 64 |
| Amount owed by subsidiary undertaking | - | - | 212 | 102 |
| Other debtors | 233 | 173 | 233 | 173 |
| VAT debtor | 455 | 209 | 455 | 209 |
| Prepayments and accrued income | 439 | 167 | 393 | 164 |
| Total | 1,234 | 630 | 1,363 | 712 |

15 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

| | Group | | Society | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | 2008 £'000 | 2007 £'000 | 2008 £'000 | 2007 £'000 |
| Trade creditors | 753 | 579 | 605 | 425 |
| Other taxes and social security costs | 157 | 211 | 135 | 173 |
| Other creditors and prepaid income | - | 30 | - | 14 |
| Accruals | 478 | 336 | 394 | 235 |
| Deferred income | 539 | 538 | 539 | 538 |
| Total | 1,927 | 1,694 | 1,673 | 1,385 |

16 Movement in consolidated funds

| | Balance at 1 January 2008 £'000 | New funds 2008 £'000 | Funds utilised 2008 £'000 | Balance at 31 December 2008 £'000 |
|-----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Restricted income funds | | | | |
| Animal collection | 174 | 922 | (992) | 104 |
| Education | 18 | 126 | (38) | 106 |
| Outreach | 4 | - | - | 4 |
| | 196 | 1,048 | (1,030) | 214 |
| Designated funds | | | | |
| Animal collection | 2,830 | 1,103 | (2,830) | 1,103 |
| Education | 18 | - | - | 18 |
| Outreach | 41 | - | - | 41 |
| Other capital projects | 2,170 | 776 | (2,170) | 776 |
| | 5,059 | 1,879 | (5,000) | 1,938 |
| Pension reserve | 682 | 1,741 | (565) | 1,858 |
| Other charitable funds | 19,113 | 17,727 | (17,305) | 19,535 |
| Total group funds employed | 25,050 | 22,395 | (23,900) | 23,545 |

Movement in Society funds

All the restricted funds and designated funds included in the consolidated statement above relate entirely to the Society. The equivalent figures for other charitable funds and total funds employed for the Society alone are:

| | Balance at 1 January 2008 £'000 | New funds 2008 £'000 | Funds utilised 2008 £'000 | Balance at 31 December 2008 £'000 |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Other charitable funds | 20,463 | 12,830 | (10,057) | 23,236 |
| Total Society funds employed | 25,718 | 15,757 | (16,087) | 25,388 |

17 Analysis of group net assets between funds

| | Tangible fixed assets £'000 | Net current assets £'000 | Total 2008 £'000 | Total 2007 £'000 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Restricted funds | - | 214 | 214 | 196 |
| Unrestricted funds | 17,225 | 6,106 | 23,331 | 24,854 |
| Total group funds employed | 17,225 | 6,320 | 23,545 | 25,050 |

The restricted income funds derive from the Animal Adoption Scheme and certain donations, grants and legacies received. Animal adoption income is all utilised to purchase animal foods, and the remaining restricted funds are put towards a variety of capital projects, equipment or outreach activities.

The designated funds relate principally to the Society's capital expenditure programme for the coming year, and to outreach programmes which the Society wishes to support over the next three to five years.

18 Financial commitments

| | Group | | Society | |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | 2008 £'000 | 2007 £'000 | 2008 £'000 | 2007 £'000 |
| Capital expenditure, contracted for But not provided in the financial statements: | 286 | 1,707 | 286 | 1,707 |

19 Related party transactions

The Society has taken advantage of the exemptions available under Financial Reporting Standard Number 8, (Related Party Transactions), not to disclose details of any transactions with entities that are part of The North of England Zoological Society group.

The Society has entered into one related party transaction (2007: One). C. Mahon, a trustee of the Society, is a director of Record Limited (whose mission is the collection and dissemination of all biodiversity information relating to the Cheshire region) which has leased office accommodation within the Zoo grounds at an annual rental of £3,000 (2007: £3,000).

20 Pensions

The Society operates two pension schemes in the UK; a defined benefit scheme and a defined contribution scheme.

Expected return on plan assets

To develop the expected long term rate of return on assets assumption, the company considered the current level of expected returns on risk free investments (primarily government bonds), the historical level of the risk premium associated with the other asset classes in which the portfolio is invested and the expectation for future returns of each asset class. The expected return for each class was then weighted based on the target asset allocation to develop the expected long-term rate of return on assets assumptions for the portfolio. This resulted in the selection of the 6.35% assumption for the year ending 31 December 2008. The corresponding expected return on assets for the year ending 31 December 2009 is 5.85%.

A full actuarial valuation was carried out as at 31st December 2005 and updated to 31 December 2008 for the purpose of these disclosures by a qualified independent actuary. The major assumptions made by the actuary for the defined benefit scheme were:

Weighted average assumptions

| used to determine benefit obligations at : | 31/12/2008 | 31/12/2007 | 31/12/2006 |
|--|------------|------------|------------|
| Discount rate | 5.60% | 5.50% | 5.10% |
| Rate of compensation increase | 4.50% | 4.90% | 4.50% |
| Rate of increase of pensions in payment (5% LPI) | 3.00% | 3.40% | 3.00% |
| Rate of increase of pensions in payment (2.5% LPI) | 2.25% | 2.40% | N/A |
| Rate of increase of pensions in deferment | 3.00% | 3.40% | 3.00% |
| Inflation | 3.00% | 3.40% | 3.00% |

Weighted average assumptions used to determine net pension cost :

| | 2008 |
|--|-------|
| Discount rate | 5.50% |
| Expected long term return of plan assets | 6.35% |
| Rate of compensation increase | 4.90% |
| Rate of increase of pensions in payment (5% LPI) | 3.40% |
| Rate of increase of pensions in payment (2.5% LPI) | 2.40% |
| Inflation | 3.40% |

Weighted average life expectancy for mortality tables used to determine benefit obligations at :

| | Male | Female |
|---|------|--------|
| Member age 65 (current life expectancy) | 22.0 | 24.8 |
| Member age 45 (life expectancy at age 65) | 23.1 | 25.9 |

The mortality assumptions have been amended to recognise that the pensioners have longer life expectancy.

20 Pensions (continued)

| | 2008 | 2007 |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| | £000 | £000 |
| Change in benefit obligation | | |
| Benefit obligation at beginning of year | 12,246 | 10,864 |
| Current service cost | 463 | 449 |
| Interest cost | 682 | 566 |
| Plan participants' contributions | 177 | 167 |
| Actuarial (gains) / losses | (1,564) | 384 |
| Benefit paid | (323) | (184) |
| Benefit obligation at end of year | 11,681 | 12,246 |
| Change in plan assets | | |
| Fair value of plan assets at beginning of year | 11,564 | 10,479 |
| Expected return of plan assets | 742 | 971 |
| Actuarial gains / (losses) | (2,869) | 36 |
| Employer contributions | 532 | 395 |
| Members contributions | 177 | 167 |
| Benefits paid | (323) | (184) |
| Fair value of plan assets at end of year | 9,823 | 11,564 |
| Analysis of pension costs | | |
| Current service cost | 463 | 449 |
| Internal cost | 682 | 566 |
| Expected return on plan assets | (742) | (671) |
| Total operating costs | 403 | 344 |
| Actual losses immediately recognised in the SOFA | 1,305 | 321 |
| Total pension cost recognised in the SOFA | 1,305 | 321 |
| Cumulative amount of actuarial losses immediately recognised | 3,570 | |

Plan Assets

The weighted average asset allocation (excluding any Defined Contribution Assets) at the year end was as follows:

| | 2008 | 2007 |
|------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Asset category | | |
| Equities | 70.4% | 68.2% |
| Bonds | 29.5% | 30.0% |
| Cash and other | 0.1% | 1.9% |
| | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| | | 2008 |
| | | £000 |
| Actual return on plan assets | | (2,100) |

20 Pensions (continued)

| Five year history | Financial year ending in | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| | 2008 | 2007 | 2006 | 2005 | 2004 |
| Benefit obligation at end of year | 11,681 | 12,246 | 10,864 | 10,038 | 8,254 |
| Fair value of plan assets at end of year | 9,823 | 11,564 | 10,452 | 9,123 | 6,138 |
| Surplus / (deficit) | (1,858) | (682) | (412) | (915) | (2,116) |
| Difference between actual and expected return on scheme assets | | | | | |
| Amount (£000s) | (2,860) | 63 | 300 | 611 | 139 |
| Percentage of scheme assets | -29% | 1% | 3% | 7% | 2% |
| Experience gains and (losses) on scheme liabilities | | | | | |
| Amount (£000s) | - | (310) | 682 | 39 | (156) |
| Percentage of scheme liabilities | 0.0% | -2.5% | 6.3% | 0.4% | 1.9% |
| Total amount recognised in statement of total recognised gain and (losses) | | | | | |
| Amount (£000s) | (1,305) | (321) | 458 | (258) | (328) |
| Percentage of scheme liabilities | -11.2% | -3% | 4.2% | -2.6% | -4.0% |

Contributions

The actuary recommended that the Society should make additional payments of £105,000 per annum for a 10 year period starting in 2007 to remove the ongoing funding deficit experienced by the Scheme as at 31 December 2005. The Society accepted this recommendation and the contribution figures shown for 2007 include these additional payments alongside the regular contributions to meet the cost of benefit accrual. Contribution rate requirements are to be reviewed as part of the actuarial valuation exercise as at 31 December 2008.

At 31 December 2008 £ 48,030 pension contributions were accrued (2007: £99,562 prepaid).

Defined contribution scheme

Contributions to the defined contribution pension scheme totalled £21,000 (2007: £15,000).



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