



A Living Landscape

Play your part in nature's recovery



Protecting **Wildlife** for the Future



The Wildlife Trusts' vision

Imagine...

...the sights and sounds of nature are part of your everyday life – wherever you live

...children are free to roam through rich landscapes with endless wildlife treasures to discover

...landscapes are full of flowers and alive with birdsong.

Did you know?

Over the past 15 years The Wildlife Trusts have been working with local people, businesses, organisations and authorities at a landscape scale. These children are playing in a meadow which is part of a huge habitat restoration scheme in Cambridgeshire.

Browne's Piece, Waresley, Matthew Roberts

Imagine a country where...

... wetlands and peatlands rich in wildlife are soaking up flood water and carbon

... our farmland and woodland is producing food and timber but also bursting with wildlife

...wildlife can move freely through countryside, towns and cities, as it adapts to climate change.

A Living Landscape is all this and more.

Did you know?

The marsh fritillary butterfly isn't just a rare and beautiful creature. Its appearance in early spring signifies the health of wetland habitats which help clean water and reduce the effects of flooding.

Marsh fritillary, Ross Hoddinott





The increasing loss of once-common species and important areas for wildlife led to the formation, in 1912, of what would become The Wildlife Trusts

The story so far

The conservation pioneers

By the 1960s, in response to the widespread devastation of our natural habitats, Wildlife Trusts had been formed across the length and breadth of the UK.

Ancient woodlands, wildflower meadows, lakes, mosses, moors, islands, estuaries and beaches were all rescued in an urgent drive to save our natural heritage for future generations.

Our founders successfully pressed for laws to protect some of the most special habitats and The Wildlife Trusts established a land holding of 2,250 nature reserves across 94,000 hectares. Other organisations joined us in this quest and bought land for nature. In this way the pioneers of the conservation movement identified and secured for the nation small oases of wildlife-rich land in an otherwise inhospitable environment.

But these were emergency measures: refuges from which it was always hoped that nature would re-emerge when the time was right.

Green-winged orchid, Paul Lane

Outside these few places habitats were lost on an unprecedented scale. 97% of our wildflower meadows have disappeared and 90% of our heathland. As the demand for land for agriculture, housing and development increased, so the room for wildlife and natural processes decreased. Woodlands were cleared, wetlands drained, rivers straightened and hedgerows removed. As a result:

- Water now flows more quickly through the landscape into our towns and cities.
- Valuable soils have been washed or blown away, undermining the ecological security of our communities.
- Statistics abound of how wildlife is struggling to thrive, restricted as it is to such isolated patches. That struggle will get harder as our climate changes.

People are suffering too from a profound separation from the natural world. This is bad for our health, our happiness and also bad for our future. We depend upon natural processes for clean water, food, flood protection and climate control – for our ecological security.

Farndale, Lee Beel

**Farndale, North York
Moors. Patches of
habitat remain but
much has been lost**





Nature isn't a luxury

Environment underpins the economy

With the country facing unprecedented economic uncertainty and pressures for energy generation, food production and housing, there is a risk that we overlook the very basis of our economy and our society: the natural environment upon which this all depends.

Climate change presents nature with a whole new challenge; and the wrong response to climate change might create still more problems. There is scant legislative provision for the proactive restoration of ecosystem health or for stimulating the creation of new habitats on a significant scale.

Did you know?

Once almost extinct in England due to organochlorine pesticide poisoning, the otter has now returned to every English county. With the right focus of effort, nature can recover.

European otter, Jamie Greer

A recovery plan for nature

Restore, recreate, reconnect

A Living Landscape is a recovery plan for nature championed by The Wildlife Trusts since 2006 to help create a resilient and healthy environment rich in wildlife and provide ecological security for people. In A Living Landscape:

...wildlife, habitats and ecosystems are recovering from past declines as we use and manage our land in greater harmony with nature

...wildlife and people are adapting well to climate change and natural processes are helping to reduce climate impacts

...people are inspired by, and engaged in, protecting the wildlife they experience

...people recognise the economic and social value of nature and the many ways it improves their quality of life.

Did you know?

Sheffield Wildlife Trust's Blacka Moor nature reserve is an area of upland heath. In good condition this habitat stores carbon, as the sphagnum mosses grow and are preserved for thousands of years as peat.

Blacka Moor, Roger Butterfield



An aerial photograph of a city, likely Nene Valley in Northamptonshire, showing a mix of urban development, roads, and green spaces. A river is visible on the left side of the image. The text is overlaid on the top left of the image.

Urban development
presents a challenge:
how can we create
connectivity for
wildlife between
towns and
countryside?

The need for a new vision

The current system isn't working

Every Trust is working within its local communities, urban and rural, to inspire people about the future of their area: their own Living Landscape.

Many millions of hours have been spent working with community groups, local authorities, landowners and developers to achieve this vision. We are finding deep-rooted support for A Living Landscape across many constituencies and The Wildlife Trusts alone have 800,000 members.

We find ourselves working amidst an array of policies and mechanisms that determine how land is used and managed. Few of these were designed with nature in mind and virtually none allow for its restoration.

The existing policy framework is fragmented and decisions are taken by a range of different bodies in isolation from each other. Faced with this vast complexity there is a risk that society slips into a mire of bureaucracy and that its vision is obscured.

The time has come for the Government to help society achieve its ambitions for nature.

Nene Valley, Northamptonshire, Matt Roberts

We now look to the Government to show leadership, remove obstacles, take bold steps and make brave decisions to help society create A Living Landscape. From our position in the local community The Wildlife Trusts believe this will require a fresh look at legislation, policies and funding mechanisms.

We believe it is possible to achieve A Living Landscape across the UK in 30 years – a single generation – but only if opportunities are seized now.

We are at a pivotal moment. We have an opportunity to lead society towards a new era in which nature plays a central role. We also have the opportunity to lead the world in restoring our natural environment. In fact, there has never been a better time to take a step back and consider nature's future.

We urgently need your help as we enter this exciting new era for nature across the country. This is a long-term agenda and we urge you to join us on our journey towards A Living Landscape. The work must start in earnest to build foundations for future nature conservation.

Reed bunting, Nicholas Watts, Vine House Farm

Nicholas Watts' pioneering work on his Lincolnshire farm proves that wildlife and a profitable business can go together





Wetlands are the
fastest natural
habitat to recover
from poor
management

Foundations for the future

An opportunity to make a difference

We need a new driver to restore the natural environment. We need to put wildlife back on the front foot. We have been pressing MPs for a White Paper on the natural environment. In England, this commitment has now been made and provides an opportunity to lay the foundations of nature conservation for the 21st century. The Wildlife Trusts believe the White Paper should:

1. Set out a new vision

An ambitious vision is needed for the restoration and recovery of the natural environment and the systems that underpin it.

2. Value nature's cathedrals

Our protected wildlife sites are nature's cathedrals, lying at the heart of this new era for nature conservation. If we are ever to pump life back into the wider landscape, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Local Wildlife Sites cannot be traded in or allowed to erode. Their ancient soils and complex habitats harbour thousands of species. Their underlying value will not diminish with climate change, although the species they support may change.

Wet woodland, Adam Cormack

A ten-year study in Sussex, supported by the local Wildlife Trust, has shown how small changes in farming can have huge benefits for threatened bats

3. Put wildlife back on the map

To restore nature on a landscape scale it will be vital for society to map out priority areas for ecological restoration. A spatial approach is a practical way to unite policy and people. A locally derived vision becomes real and exciting, and numerous strands of protection, incentive and investment can be drawn together. With statutory backing, locally defined frameworks for ecological restoration should inform long-term decisions on land-use and management.

4. Give wildlife room to manoeuvre

If species are to have room to move and habitats space to adapt, we will need to set policies and incentives that allow us to:

- Protect and maximise the value of areas that are already rich in wildlife.
- Expand and buffer these areas and create connections and stepping stones between them.
- Make the wider landscape more permeable to wildlife.

Barbastelle bat, Frank Greenaway





Foundations for the future

An opportunity to make a difference

5. Restore natural processes

Natural systems provide a range of free services such as crop pollination and filtering water. Increasing pressure on the natural environment, coupled with the predicted impacts of climate change, mean measures will need to be taken to restore these natural processes so they can operate to their full potential for our benefit and so wildlife can thrive.

Did you know?

The Wildlife Trusts have for many years helped farmers improve their environmental performance. It was thanks to The Wildlife Trusts that blackcurrant farmer Jo Hilditch (left) spearheaded a drive by Ribena to make all their suppliers wildlife-friendly.

Jo Hilditch, Hugo Dixon

An outdoor class for schoolchildren in Birmingham. Every local community has the right to a green and healthy environment

6. Ensure there is wildlife on everyone's doorstep

Nature matters to everyone. Wildlife has no concept of urban or rural and our rivers and natural processes span administrative boundaries. Every community in the country could be inspired to develop local solutions to the particular challenges for restoring nature in their area.

7. Inspire a new type of partnership

Central and local government, agencies, the private sector and voluntary bodies will need to act in concert to ensure ecological restoration happens throughout the country. There will need to be recognition and respect for the wealth of local knowledge and ambition. There will be a need for measures to inspire and enable cross-boundary co-operation and opportunities to support the voluntary sector in its delivery.

Outdoor classroom, Birmingham, Matthew Roberts





Help make history

Now is the time to act

Now is the time to make the right decisions to safeguard our wildlife.

Now is the time to ensure our ecological security and create A Living Landscape.

Support The Wildlife Trusts in creating A Living Landscape.

Share our vision.

Add your voice to our call to action.

Tell others about A Living Landscape and ask them to help us too.

Did you know?

Potteric Carr, a superb wetland just a mile from Doncaster city centre, attracts 33,000 visitors a year. Action by a Yorkshire Wildlife Trust group in the 1970s saved it from disappearing under the M18. By storing water, it reduced the impact of the 2008 floods in the city.

Potteric Carr visitors, Neil Aldridge

Future generations will judge

We must not forget what's been lost

It is easy to forget that our natural environment is actually a shadow of its former self. It is easy to lower our expectations, to accept having to travel many miles to see bluebells or to find a peaceful green space, to accept the silence and uniformity of our fields or the absence of insects in the air above.

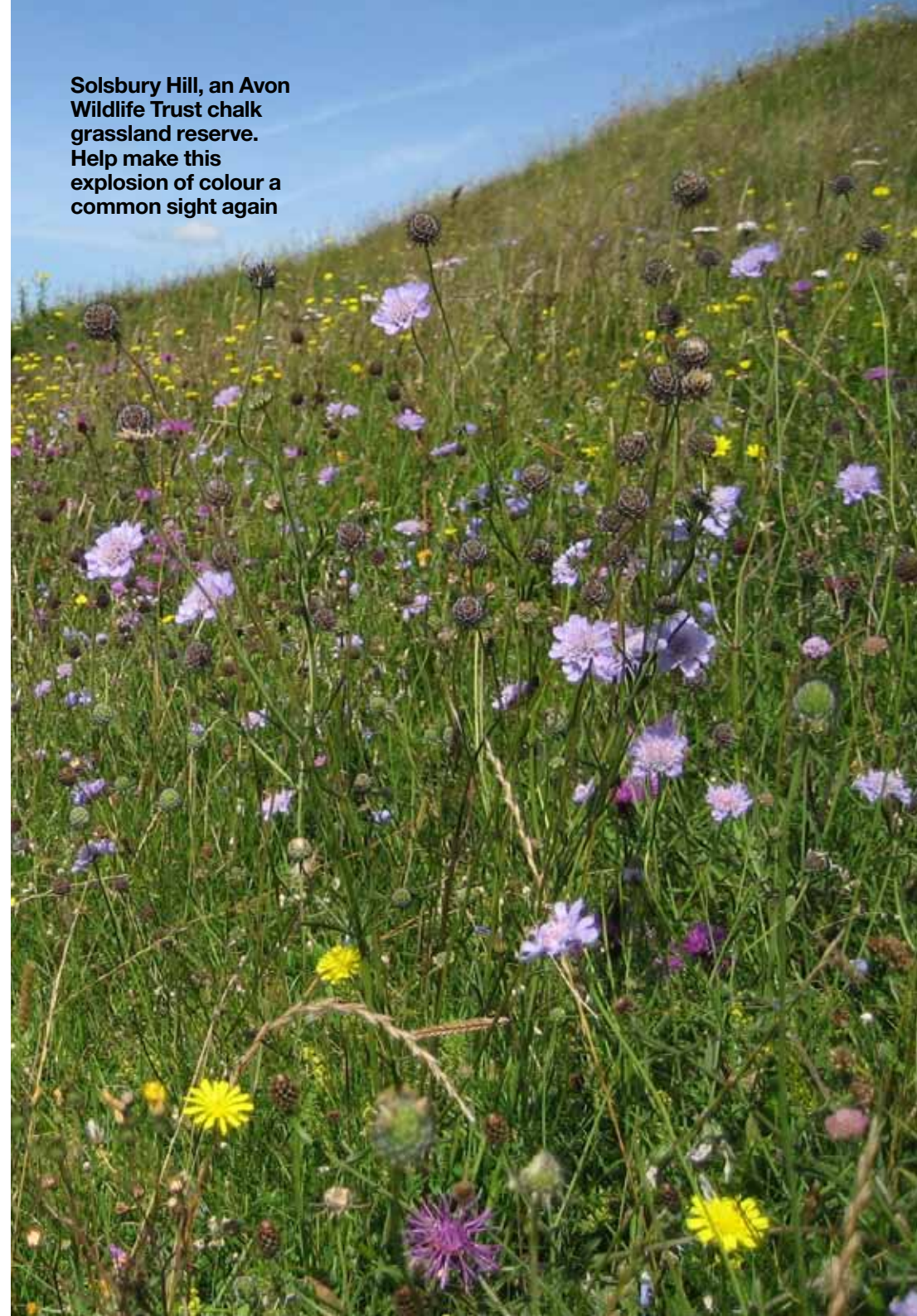
A Living Landscape is about raising our sights again and breathing life back into our world.

We must be optimistic and celebrate and enjoy the wildlife we still have, but we must never forget what we have lost. If we do future generations will never forgive us. Everyone in the country has a fundamental right to a healthy natural environment.

The founders of the nature conservation movement were visionary and passionate in the face of extraordinary challenges. We owe it to them, and to ourselves, to lead an exciting new era for nature: to create A Living Landscape.

Solsbury Hill, Mark Smith, FWAG

Solsbury Hill, an Avon Wildlife Trust chalk grassland reserve. Help make this explosion of colour a common sight again



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**Balls Wood, a Herts
and Middlesex
Wildlife Trust
reserve. Everyone
has the right to walk
in a place like this.
Clare Gray**



Protecting **Wildlife** for the Future