



Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust



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Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust



Protecting wildlife for the future Impact Report 2017 – 2018



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Creating, Connecting, Inspiring, Shaping

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust connects and improves the county's wildlife and wild places. We have a vision where each year there is more wildlife, more wild places and more people with a connection to the natural world.

This report outlines the work that we have carried out to deliver the first year of our ambitious five-year plan and the impact that we are having on wildlife, wild places and people throughout the county.

In the past 12 months our staff and volunteers, with funding and support from our members, trusts, organisations and companies, have worked hard to help to deliver our plan.

We have been:

- Creating bigger, better and more connected places where people and wildlife can thrive
- Inspiring more people and communities to take action for nature
- Leading on 'natural solutions', championing the value of what nature can do for us
- Growing our resources, influence and reach, shaping a strong organisation

38,000

**More than 38,000
active supporters**



**Close to 500 regularly
active volunteers,
including 100 new
volunteers**



Wildlife and Wild Places

Wildlife flourishes where it can move through good-quality, connected landscape. We are enhancing our nature reserves and creating 'living landscapes' - areas in the countryside and towns for the benefit of wildlife and people.

Connecting wild places

Wildlife cannot survive solely on nature reserves, which is why we are focusing our efforts on linking our sites with neighbouring green spaces. A strip of privately owned woodland linking our Box Wood and Stuart Fawkes nature reserves has now been donated, enabling us to manage all these areas to benefit wildlife. We are also working with another landowner, responsible for the nearby Iron Mills Common, to bring about joined-up management of glades and rides. Such arrangements will be key in the coming decades.

The site's ancient woodland has areas of hazel trees and box trees, making it an ideal habitat for dormice. In the spring there are masses of wood anemones and bluebells and in summer common-spotted orchids. Tawny owls and great spotted woodpeckers can be heard, while nuthatches and tree creepers can be observed scaling the trees.



Creating heathland in the Forest of Dean

In the Forest of Dean, through a partnership with the Forestry Commission, we are restoring large areas of heathland – vital open habitats for a wide range of species and a traditional part of the landscape in this area of the county.

Our nature reserves here now cover 137 hectares and support scarce birds including nightjars, woodlarks, stonechats and great grey shrike, and our work to improve heathland means that people are once again exploring these sites. Reptiles, insects, heathers and mosses are increasingly being monitored as habitats mature because of our work, enabling us to make ongoing improvements.

Grazing animals are vital to the success of these landscape-scale projects and through the Foresters' Forest project we have introduced conservation grazing using Exmoor ponies at our Edgehills and Wigpool nature reserves.



Heathland plant cover at Poor's Allotment in the Forest of Dean has increased by 88%

Improving habitats at Crickley Hill

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust acquired Crickley Hill in 2016, when it had significant areas of scrub, with impenetrable masses of bushes and young trees smothered by bramble and clematis. The interior of these dense areas were dark and lifeless.

In conjunction with the National Trust (which owns part of the site), we have removed some of this intrusive scrub and have already created an open habitat for flowering plants, such as orchids, which provide sources of nectar for pollinating insects. Kestrels can be seen hovering in search of voles over these rich grasslands, and we have left small patches of scrub to provide refuges for adders, which now have large sunny banks where they can bask and hunt.

Students from the University of Gloucestershire are recording the improvement in biodiversity here and the popularity of Crickley Hill as a wildlife destination for local visitors is increasing.



62

We manage 62 reserves that cover a total area of 1,088 hectares

467

467 species found at our newest nature reserve, Box Wood, during a 24-hour bioblitz

Your Wildlife: Inspiring Communities

We are inspiring individuals and communities to appreciate the wildlife and wild places around them, and to give more children the chance to love being outside.

Hands-on education

A priority area for Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust is to help young children enjoy being outside so they will feel at ease in nature, and ready to learn about wildlife. We have helped 18,000 young people to experience wildlife – in towns, cities or on nature reserves – exceeding the 6,000 target that we set.

Our wildlife and Iron Age workshops provide fun educational activities for pupils, and the chance to explore

our sites alongside trained staff and volunteers. This year we engaged with 35% of primary schools in Gloucestershire, compared with 14% in 2016-17.

Education is important at all ages and outside of the formal education system which is why we deliver excellent sessions for toddlers, older children (with initiatives such as Forest Explorers) and for adults.



Urban wildlife

Developing wildlife-rich towns that residents will want to protect for years to come is an increasingly important and exciting area of our work.

Working alongside residents and the Fair Shares charity, we have made visible improvements to the Milton Avenue Green Space in the Podsmead area of Gloucester. We have cleared overgrown parts of the site, restored the pond, and installed eye-catching wooden sculptures and a bench.

Anti-social behaviour has reduced and litter has been cleared up, while butterflies, bats, moths, slow worms and a variety of birds were spotted within a few weeks of the start of the project.

We run a number of regular events at Robinswood Hill Country Park close to the centre of Gloucester, including Nature Tots sessions for toddlers and activities for older children, and offer volunteering opportunities in the county's urban areas.



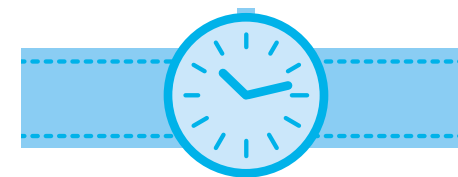
Vital volunteers

Our work is supported by nearly 500 active volunteers, whose input is vital whether they are putting up fencing on a nature reserve, creating and tending gardens at Robinswood Hill and Greystones, running events alongside members of staff, or helping in the office.

We have created a number of additional volunteer roles, including new reserve management groups at sites including Woorgreens. Through the Foresters' Forest project in the Forest of Dean we have expanded our education programme with the creation of volunteer-led groups for children under the age of 5, and have trained volunteer walk leaders. People volunteer for many different reasons and we are proud to deliver high-quality experiences for our volunteers: 99% of volunteers rate their time with us as 'good' or 'excellent'.

"As a volunteer you learn lots of new skills, connect with the countryside and understand its importance to our lives and wellbeing. But most of all, volunteering is about having fun with a great bunch of like-minded people"

Mike Bailey



Volunteers contributed more than 32,500 hours of their time, worth £393,000 to the Trust

Natural Solutions

Nature has the power to enrich and improve our lives, and in the last year we have been leading the way at a county-wide and national level.

Building with Nature

Building with Nature, our pioneering benchmark for high-quality housing development, was launched in November 2017. The benchmark supports planners and housebuilders to get the most out of new developments for people and wildlife, and covers housing and commercial projects. It does this by securing natural features in the design and maintenance of

places, such as play areas, street trees, parks, allotments and ponds. It is the first benchmark of its kind in the UK and is already being used by Persimmon Homes and Bloor Homes among others. The benchmark covers three key themes – wildlife, water and wellbeing.



Natural Flood Management

Following the devastating series of floods that affected parts of the county in the last few years, we are establishing ourselves as experts in natural flood management and providing services to the Environment Agency and Stroud District Council.

We install natural flood management interventions including 'leaky dams' which slow down the rate at which water travels downstream during periods of high flow after heavy rainfall. This year we started projects in the River Twyver catchment area east of Gloucester, and the River Coln catchment area above Andoversford, and have carried on our work in the headwaters of the River Frome above Stroud.

Leaky dams: by placing natural objects such as tree trunks and large branches into rivers and streams, we create obstacles which store and slow down the flow of water. To date, 150 leaky dams have been installed.



Brighter Futures

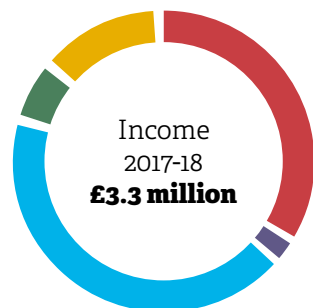
Brighter Futures sessions provide socially isolated, marginalised and unemployed people with the chance to learn new skills and improve their employment prospects and personal wellbeing. We offer training and support in conservation tasks, and by carrying out work in local green spaces

participants improve neighbourhood safety and make a positive contribution to local communities. In the last year 81% of participants reported an improvement in their mental wellbeing and 83% of young participants feel more confident about applying for a job.



Thank you!

Because of our wide range of supporters we've been able to protect wildlife and wild places and connect people with nature, spending £2.9 million on our work.



44% ■ Grants, trusts and corporates
35% ■ Membership and donations
13% ■ Trading subsidiaries
6% ■ Earned income
2% ■ Legacies



72p ■ Supporting wildlife and wild places
15p ■ Generating the next £1
13p ■ Establishing and running our trading subsidiaries, to broaden our income base for the future

Grants

Big Lottery Fund
Cotswold District Council
Cotswolds Conservation Board
CPRE
Environment Agency
European Regional Development Funds
Forest of Dean District Council
Forestry Commission
FWAG
Gloucester City Council
Gloucester City Homes
Gloucestershire County Council
Gloucestershire Gateway Trust
Gloucestershire Naturalists' Society
Gloucestershire Police & Crime Commissioner's Fund
Heritage Lottery Fund
Local Nature Partnership for Gloucestershire
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Natural England
Newent Town Council
Rural Payments Agency
Severn Rivers Trust
South West Environmental Network
Stroud District Council
Tewkesbury Borough Council
University of Gloucestershire
University of the West of England

Enovert Community Trust
Ibstock Enovert Trust
The Gloucestershire Environmental Trust Company

Corporate members and supporters

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Hampton Colours
JPR Environmental
Santander Foundation
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Thames Water Community Fund
The Midcounties Co-operative
Vine House Farm
Waitrose
Western Power Distribution
Wildlife Travel

Charitable trusts

Alan Evans Memorial Fund
Banister Charitable Trust
Barnwood Trust
Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society
British Hedgehog Preservation Society
Dent Brocklehurst Family Trust
D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust
Halpin Trust

High Sheriff of Gloucestershire Grants Programme
J & M Britton Charitable Trust
Langdale Trust
Linley Shaw Foundation
McCorquodale Charitable Trust
MV Hillhouse Trust
National Trust
Naturesave Trust
Notgrove Trust
People's Trust for Endangered Species
Statham Family Charitable Trust
Summerfield Charitable Trust
The HDH Wills 1965 Charitable Trust
Verdon-Smith Family Charitable Trust
Wild Trout Trust

Community organisations

Cirencester Rotary Club
Cirencester Wildlife Group
Cotswold Wardens
Forest of Dean Area Group
Friends of Robinswood Hill
Nailsworth Rotary Club
North Cotswold Rotary Club
Ramblers Association
Stroud Wildlife Survey Group

And thank you to all our Members, Wildlife Guardians, Patrons, Supporters and Volunteers.

**Our work is possible
because of your support.**

The Year Ahead

The incredible projects you've read about in this report don't end now. Thanks to your support, so much of the work we've started this year is set to grow over the next few years.

The relaunch of our education programme has only just started and in the next year Greystones in Bourton-on-the-Water should be established as a hub to inspire a new generation to understand and care for wildlife. Fingers crossed, we should see pine martens reintroduced to the Forest of Dean, building our great partnership with the Forestry Commission which will also continue to restore heathland as part of the Foresters' Forest partnership. And our work creating space for nature in housing developments through Building with Nature is set to expand.

This is a time of huge change and uncertainty for wildlife, as leaving the European Union will transform the laws and policies that protect our natural environment. It's times like this when we are particularly proud to be working closely together with Wildlife Trusts around the UK, and with other conservation organisations, to provide a strong voice for nature.

Your membership and support of Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust powers the work you've read about in this report, but it does something equally important. It shows that you stand with millions around the country who care about a future for our wildlife and wild places.

"Your membership and support of Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust powers our work"

We'll also be launching some new projects. We want to make more havens for wildlife in our towns and city. Even in a rural county like Gloucestershire, most people live in urban areas and we also want to increase the ways they can engage with wildlife. We'll be starting work on a new partnership with the Cotswold Canals Trust, helping to create a new wildlife corridor alongside their canal restoration. And we want to rethink how we can work together with farmers and landowners to create bigger, better and more connected landscapes where nature can thrive.



Roger Mortlock

Roger Mortlock
Chief Executive



Ross Hoddinott 2020 Vision



Gloucestershire

**To find out more and get involved
please contact us.**

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For regular updates about our work sign
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