



Gloucestershire
Wildlife Trust

Growing
hope *for a*
wilder future

Our strategy for 2025-2030





About us

We are Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, the largest charity in the county dedicated to local wildlife. We want everyone in Gloucestershire to value and enjoy wildlife in the county and believe strongly that nature matters, not only in its own right, but for the benefits it brings to people.

We aim to play a central role in tackling the ecological and climate emergencies, working closely with local communities and our partners in the county. We manage over 1,100 hectares of nature reserves and work with farmers and landowners across Gloucestershire. Nature's recovery depends on people and re-connecting their sense of belonging in the natural world.

26,000 members in Gloucestershire support our work, with hundreds regularly volunteering time, support and energy.



Pine marten © Terry Whittaker2020VISION

Foreword:

Bringing nature back – with you

Over the last 50 years, nature has disappeared faster than at any point in human history. One in six species is now at risk of extinction in the UK. We are facing both climate and ecological emergencies – and each year brings clearer evidence of the disruption this is causing. We need to do much more than just conserve what remains of Gloucestershire's wildlife.

Our challenge for 2030 is clear: to stop and reverse wildlife declines in the county. Not just because that's the right thing to do, but because it is essential for tackling climate change, ensuring food security and supporting the health and wellbeing of people living here. And we must act now, before time runs out to secure nature's recovery in Gloucestershire.

We're determined, bolder, and working well beyond our own nature reserves - in close collaboration with local partners, farmers, and communities. This collective effort is vital if we are to restore habitats at scale, aligned with the Nature Recovery Network and stitched into the fabric of Gloucestershire's landscapes.

But we can't do this alone. Re-connecting people's sense of belonging in nature is mission-critical in creating more places for nature to thrive, and in ensuring a fair, inclusive transition to a nature-rich county. In particular, we must harness the passion and creativity of young people, supporting them to inherit a Gloucestershire where nature thrives in abundance once more.

And, as ever, our success depends on the incredible commitment of our amazing partners, supporters, volunteers and members. These plans are unashamedly and deliberately ambitious because the next five years are crucial. With your support, we can act for nature at the scale and pace required, and grow hope for a wilder future for Gloucestershire.



Andrew McLaughlin
CEO



Professor Kathryn Monk
Chair

Our purpose

As humans, we're deeply connected to the natural world and that world is powerful, dynamic, and resilient.

At Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, we believe that nature offers the solutions to some of the biggest problems we face today, from climate change to our personal wellbeing.

That's why we work with local communities and partners, using evidence and our hands-on experience, in the service of people and wildlife. Whether it's a project on your street or something landscape scale, we believe that every action, big or small, can help shape a brighter, wilder future for us all.



Our values



We're *ambitious*
and dream big – for
people and for nature.



We *collaborate*
because we can achieve
more together



We're *inclusive*
and believe that nature
is for everyone



We act with *responsibility*
for the work we do and the world
we're helping to shape

Together, we're growing hope for a wilder future

We are rooted locally, but part of something bigger

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust is part of a network of 46 independent Wildlife Trusts across the UK. Together we are ambitious not just to slow, but to reverse the declines in wildlife. We speak with a bold and confident voice, to tell the truth about the state of nature and what needs to be done to put it in recovery.

Our strategy is rooted in Gloucestershire and the specific challenges we face here. But we also share common goals across the Wildlife Trusts, working in close collaboration with them and other organisations and partners to ensure there is connectivity for nature across county and national borders.

Across the Wildlife Trust movement, we look to establish common cause and work in partnership with others, to develop new, innovative ways to do what's right for nature and deliver impact in support of our vision.

We hope to demonstrate what is possible, and inspire, empower, and enable people from all ages, backgrounds, cultures, identities and abilities to bring about our vision with us, embracing the diversity of our society to change the natural world for the better. We want young people, in particular, to play an increased role in shaping our work.

Crickley Hill © Adam Smith

Our common Wildlife Trust goals for 2030:

Stopping and reversing wildlife declines

The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. In Gloucestershire alone, we've lost seventy per cent of traditional orchards in the last fifty years, along with most of our wildflower-rich meadows. If declines in Gloucestershire's nature cannot be halted before 2030, it will be increasingly difficult, and in some cases impossible, to reverse. But there's still time to turn things around.

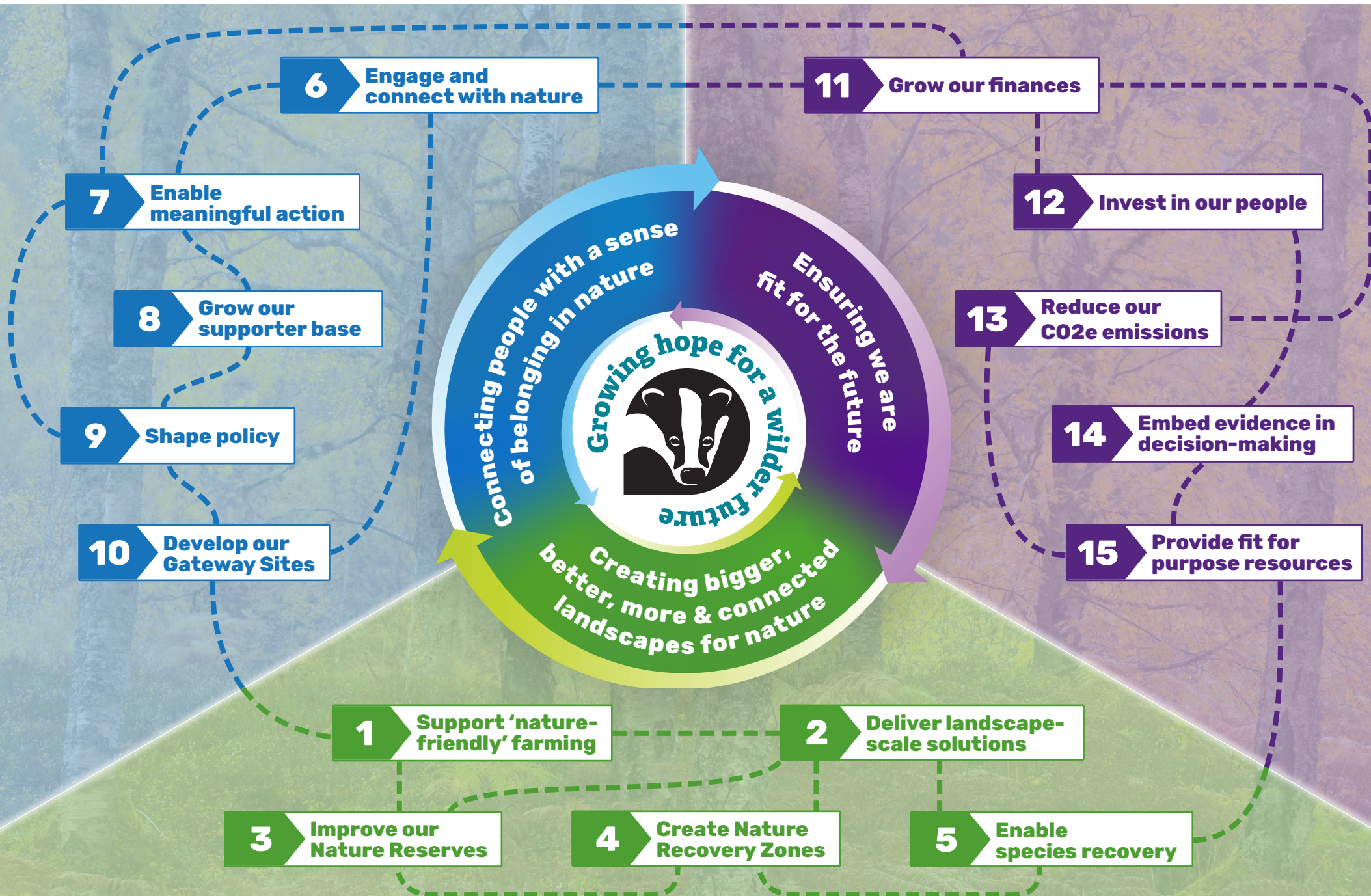
More people taking action for nature

People are key to nature's recovery. We need nature, yet we are increasingly disconnected from the natural world. As Sir David Attenborough has said: 'No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced'. We want to engage and empower people to value, enjoy, speak up and take action for wildlife.

Normalising natural solutions to climate change

We believe that the climate and ecological crises are inextricably linked. We can't solve one without addressing the other. Climate change is driving nature's decline and the loss of wildlife and wild places leaves us ill-equipped to reduce atmospheric carbon and adapt to climate change.

Our strategy for 2025-2030



Creating bigger, better, more and connected landscapes for nature

Our nature reserves remain at the very heart of what we do. As well as caring for these local spaces for the benefit of both communities and wildlife in Gloucestershire, we are managing these vital strongholds to create opportunities for nature's recovery.

In 2010, the landmark Lawton Report called for UK conservation to focus on sites that are bigger, better, more, and joined up. Our current reserves form the backbone of that vision. Now we must continue to ensure that they're better connected and supported for wildlife.

Nature Recovery Zones (NRZs) are our response to this. These are large, connected landscapes centred on our key reserves. Guided by our Nature Recovery Network map we are expanding and linking habitats by acquiring land and working with farmers, landowners, and communities to create thriving, wildlife-rich places.

Our bigger, better, more and connected objectives:

1

Support the growth of 'nature-friendly' farming practices. As farmers and landowners transition to these practices, we aim to offer advice, support for farm clusters and aid in landscape-scale projects.

2

Develop and deliver landscape-scale nature-based solutions. We work across landscapes at scale to aid nature's recovery. Using natural solutions from flood alleviation to carbon sequestration we are finding new ways to respond to the climate and ecological crises.

3

Improve the condition, resilience and impact of our nature reserves. In a changing climate, it is vital that our nature reserves planning and management incorporate key adaptations and recognise the role these sites play in supporting wider nature recovery.

4

Grow the impact of Nature Recovery Zones (NRZs). Working in partnership to create a vision for these wider NRZs, we will collaborate with others to join up habitats and provide larger more connected sites for nature throughout the county.

5

Support reintroduction and facilitated migrations of keystone species. Focusing on iconic and cornerstone species in Gloucestershire, we can play a key role in bringing nature back and inspiring our supporters with hope for a wilder future.

Our strategy in action:

Creating bigger, better, more and connected landscapes for nature

Gloucestershire's Treescapes – connecting habitats

Severn Treescapes is working to increase tree cover across Gloucestershire, in partnership with Herefordshire and Worcestershire Wildlife Trusts, and alongside initiatives like the Western Forest. This will create 2,000 hectares of new, connected woodland.

The benefits are wide-ranging: improved biodiversity, healthier soils, better livestock welfare, reduced flood risk, and thousands of tonnes of carbon captured annually.

Many of these woodlands will also offer nature-rich spaces for over 600,000 people to enjoy, while we continue protecting existing forests to support climate action and community wellbeing.

Conservation grazing for species recovery

Conservation grazing is a vital tool in conserving and restoring our species-rich habitats. In the Forest of Dean, our heathland restoration sites provide important open habitat within the wider forest for species such as nightjars and adders.

In the Cotswolds, grassland habitats support iconic species like the large blue butterfly, while at Lower Woods, conservation grazing helps maintain the rich mosaic of woodland and meadow habitats that make this site so special.

By enhancing and expanding our conservation grazing work, we will help vital habitats to thrive and support a greater diversity of wildlife.

Restoring Gloucestershire's river systems

Healthy river systems provide support for a host of species and provide resilience in the face of climate change. Sadly, many rivers in Gloucestershire are in a poor ecological state.

As part of our wider landscape-scale approach to river and wetland restoration, we are embracing species-led approaches, such as the reintroduction of beavers, as a way of reducing flood risk, and supporting biodiversity.

Our beaver feasibility study determined that 91% of the public in Gloucestershire are supportive of bringing beavers back, suggesting there is clear interest in exploring species-driven nature-based solutions.



*Images left to right: Noble chafer © Harry Green |
Conservation grazing © GWT | Beaver*

Connecting people with a sense of belonging in nature

At the heart of virtually every single problem faced by wildlife in the UK is that we – as individuals and society as a whole – have become disconnected from the natural world. Re-kindling people's sense of belonging in the natural world is therefore mission critical for our work, not least because people taking meaningful action for nature is paramount to our success.

Our focus is on connecting people with nature in whatever way suits them – be it on their doorstep or across the county. Nature is for everyone, and we aim to ensure equitable access to wild places is available to all, alongside opportunities to experience nature in daily life.

Our people and nature objectives:

6.

Engage and connect more people with nature. Through formal learning sessions and new work programmes, we aim to grow our relevance and inspire people to develop a stronger connection with the natural world.

7.

Empower people to take meaningful action for nature. We will continue to empower people to make a difference – whether that's putting up bird feeders at home or writing to their MP in support of a wilder future.

8.

Grow our supporter base. Our members, donors and volunteers are the lifeblood of the organisation. We aim to continue growing our supporter base, developing new ways to support us and continually strengthening the relevance of our offer.

9.

Shape policy to protect and enhance nature. We rely on national and local policy to support our ambitions. By continuing to build important connections with policy-makers, we can take valuable steps towards securing nature's recovery.

10.

Develop our gateway sites. Our high-footfall sites, like Robinswood Hill and Crickley Hill, offer key opportunities to engage visitors and generate income. We aim to enhance these sites and strengthen their impact.

Our strategy in action: **Connecting people with a sense of belonging in nature**

Shaping nature and climate policy for future generations

We are playing an increasingly important role in shaping the policy environment affecting Gloucestershire and the wider UK, through regular engagements with MPs, councillors and other decision-makers, alongside tireless advocacy work.

In 2024 we joined more than 60,000 people at the Restore Nature Now march in London, calling for decisive action from the government to support nature's recovery.

In 2025, we launched Nature Matters – a campaign directed at calling on the public to stand up for nature against the ongoing destruction of nature protections in Parliament.

Wilder Learning - connecting young audiences with nature

The learning team inspires all ages to start a lifelong journey of nature connectedness, love of local wildlife and action for the natural world.

This begins with monthly outdoor adventures for pre-schoolers at Nature Tots and continues as Primary school children visit reserves for hands-on exploration. In a typical year, we welcome over seventy school visits, and welcome more than 2,000 children.

For young people, Youth Rangers offers 13 to 17-year-olds volunteering and conservation opportunities, while the Youth Advisory Group empowers 16 to 25-year-olds to advise, amplify, and shape Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust's future.

Do One Thing for Nature – taking simple actions for wildlife

Funded by a National Lottery Community Fund Grant, Do One Thing inspires people aged 5 to 90 to take simple, meaningful actions for nature.

From litter picking to building bug hotels, the initiative encourages people to connect with nature, reducing eco-anxiety, and creating intergenerational opportunities to share ideas and experiences.

So far, the initiative has reached more than 7,000 people across the county, with ambitions to expand its reach even further.



Images left to right: GWT at the Restore Nature Now campaign 2024 | Youth Rangers © GWT | Litterpicking at Podsmead © GWT

Ensuring we are fit for the future

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust was founded in 1961 by a group of volunteers, led by Sir Peter Scott. Since this moment, we have gone from strength to strength.

Today we are powered by a team of over 100 colleagues and 600 volunteers. We care for more than 1,100 hectares of land in the county, and successfully deliver projects worth millions of pounds involving a complex range of stakeholders and funders.

Our growth and scale of ambition for 2030 means that it is important to focus attention on the foundational aspects of our work, ensuring that we continue to thrive as an organisation and are best-placed to deliver our goals for nature and for people in the county for years to come.

Our fit for the future objectives:

11.

Diversify income and grow our financial reserves. Our work relies on funding, so managing costs and achieving sustainable income growth is key to securing the resources needed to meet our goals.

12.

Invest in people, growing capacity, capability and diversity. We are a people-powered organisation. Curating a professional and supportive work environment is vital to all we achieve, both now and into the future.

13.

Reduce our CO2e emissions and become net positive. Climate change is the single biggest threat to nature in the UK. We aim to lead by example to reduce our CO2e emissions and eventually becoming net positive across our operations.

14.

Put evidence at the heart of our decision-making. Building on our work with the Nature Recovery Network, embedding learning and evidence across all decision-making will maximise our impact for people, wildlife, and the organisation.

15.

Provide fit for purpose facilities, IT and resources. Ensuring that our people have the resources and the correct working environment to do their best work is important in attaining our mission.

Our strategy in action: Ensuring that Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust is fit for the future

HabiMap - volunteer-led habitat mapping for local nature recovery

Launched in 2020, HabiMap improves our evidence base, addressing critical gaps in national and satellite data by providing accurate, up-to-date, and detailed habitat information.

Each year, trained volunteers survey sites across the county, using a mobile app to record habitat type and quality under the UK Habitat Classification system (UKHab). Data is centrally processed and integrated into the county's complete cover digital habitat map.

Nature Recovery Network and Ecosystem Service mapping have been derived from this data and used to underpin the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Since 2020, over 213 contributors have mapped more than 95 km².

Wild Trainees - the next generation of nature champions

With generous funding from Thirty Percy and individual donors, we have established our Wild Trainee programme. Currently aimed at 18 to 25-year-olds, our initiative offers a year's worth of immersive, hands-on experience in a wide range of roles in the sector – such as Communications & Supporter Development, Evidence and Engagement, and Learning.

Trainees spend up to a year honing their skills for a career in conservation receiving mentoring from senior colleagues, practical training and a chance to try out a wide range of roles in the sector.

“My Wild Traineeship has allowed me to have the most amazing experience, where I have learnt a huge amount from my mentor and the rest of the staff at GWT.”

GWT cafés – channelling income back into nature

Our cafés at Robinswood Hill and Crickley Hill play a vital role in supporting our charitable work, generating essential funds that help drive nature's recovery.

We serve over 50,000 meals and drinks annually, so it's important to us that our cafés reflect our values while offering our supporters a way to contribute directly to nature's recovery through the food and drink they enjoy with us.

We work closely with our suppliers and partners to champion products from local, nature-friendly farms - creating a direct link between everyday choices and positive change for nature.



Images left to right: Siccarridge and Sapperton HABI mapping © Nick Turner | Wild trainees © Jess Thorne | Café at Robinswood Hill © GWT



Gloucestershire
Wildlife Trust

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Front cover: barn owl © Andrew Mason

Back cover: wren © Gary Gleghorn

