

WILDER

DERBYSHIRE



Derbyshire
Wildlife Trust




City Nature Challenge

Derby

April 28th to May 1st

Find out more:

www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/citynaturechallenge



Jo Smith
Chief Executive Officer

WELCOME

Spring is by far my favourite time of year! For me, nothing comes close to that moment when nature bursts into life after a long winter. It's a welcome, natural boost as we emerge from the cold – and it signals a new chapter, as we head out and reconnect with the world around us.

Signs of spring are everywhere. Whether you're taking a walk around the block, heading to your local park or stretching your legs through glorious woodlands, this new season is a real treat.

One of the first signs that warmer days are coming is the appearance of snowdrops. It's something I get so excited about each year and I'm sure the joy is felt by many of us.

I know spring is here when I'm pleasantly woken by the cheerful sound of birdsong. Around one hour before sunrise, the chorus begins as our feathered friends signal their territories, find a mate, and start a feeding frenzy.

Spring even smells different! The sweet scent of blossom, wildflowers and tree buds all invite us to get outside, go for a walk or start that garden project we've been meaning to do.

But spring also reminds me how fragile nature is, and how vulnerable it is to the changing climate and other threats.

Let's give nature a boost this year; together we can ensure that the wonder of wildlife continues to put a spring in our step for many seasons to come.

Thanks for your support.



Join the Conversation

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On the cover

Tawny owl © iStock

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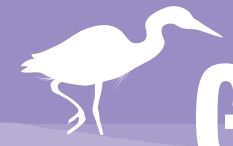
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SPOTTED




 Share your images with us
www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife/record-sighting



Peregrine – Belper
Photo: January 2023 © Christopher Jackson

Snowdrops – Willow Pit, Hilton
Photo: January 2023 © Kayleigh Wright



Stone Chat – Wyver Lane
Photo: January 2023 © Christopher Jackson



Water Rail – Wyver Lane
Photo: January 2023 © Richard Taylor

LEARNING THROUGH NATURE GETS A BOOST!

We have been awarded £222,000 by The National Lottery Heritage Fund to boost our Learning Through Nature programme and to engage people to help solve the nature crises. England is among the most nature-depleted countries in the world. For nature to recover, science tells us we need more, bigger areas for nature, managed better and connected so that wildlife can move through the landscape. We will use the funding to scale up our existing community programmes, including Nature Tots for 3- to 5-year-olds and Junior



Forest School, Hope, Derbyshire

Rangers for 11- to 18-year-olds, and will offer subsidised accredited training to schools in five areas of Derbyshire. We are also expanding our Wilder Schools programme to encourage more outdoor learning and will create six new traineeships to develop careers in community engagement and practical conservation, following the success of our Working for Nature programme.

Nature based solutions for climate grant

We are delighted to have been awarded £645,886 from Natural England's Nature based solutions for climate grant to move our Derwent Forest Landscape Recovery Project forward. This project aims to create

connected wooded habitats between the Northern and National Forests to allow the north-south movement of species in response to climate change.

It will also develop an economically viable program to support landowners to create and expand dynamic and resilient ecosystems.

We are committed to addressing the UK's climate and ecological emergencies and believe that joining together rewilding and a focus on increasing natural capital offers the best mechanism to provide nature-based solutions, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote carbon sequestration. Creating or restoring semi-natural habitats and providing the most dynamic and resilient ecosystems possible, will be critical as climate impacts increase on our fragmented landscapes.



Thornhill Peak District
© Sam Rose

The Latest NEWS



Could you be the change in the next election?

2023 will see the biggest exercise in local democracy since 2019 as elections are held in Derby City, all eight of the borough/district councils, and all parish and town councils. Your votes on 4 May will determine who is in office from 2023–2027 across almost every level of local government, making it a significant moment for nature recovery in Derbyshire. With sufficient drive, councils of all stripes can make a positive difference because nature is not party-political.

We have been making that case to local decision makers to ensure wildlife is considered in every manifesto and pitched to the electorate. While the biodiversity crisis might seem beyond our control, working with, and through, councils is one of the easiest ways to make a difference close to home. We'll be scrutinising manifesto commitments and monitoring local authorities to check if their environmental pledges get delivered.



We're also encouraging our supporters to highlight the importance of nature to local people by running for local council as a candidate in May. Over 200 parish and town councils will be up for re-election across the county. These are often the entry point for many into local politics and tend to be the first port of call for residents who want to make change in their community. Parish/town councils are good forums for engaging in hyperlocal issues and understanding them in the wider context.

Consider speaking up for nature by running for council in May, and if you're elected, you can change the agenda, heighten awareness of key issues and ensure that nature has a voice when the backroom decisions are made. Local councils will be key to driving nature's recovery in Derbyshire and with supportive representatives in place, we can make their impact even greater.

In Memory Of



Ron Turner passed away on Friday 20th January 2023. A keen birdwatcher and general naturalist, Ron was a Volunteer Warden for many years at The Avenue Washlands, having seen its transformation from the old coking plant works into a haven for wildlife. He spent countless hours there, regularly patrolling the reserve, first recording all the birds seen on every visit and then flowers and insects as his interests and ID skills grew. Astoundingly, Ron sent in over 22,000 species records for the Avenue Washlands from 2009 to 2018. Once a familiar face at the reserve, he will be greatly missed by many.



What's next for badgers?



On the morning I met Sheila, the sun was just poking its head over the hill near Cowdale in the White Peak, and the rumble of a working quarry across the A6 was the only accompaniment to our quest. We had met to look at some suspicious activity around the entrance to a badger sett in an open part of a site managed by DWT on behalf of one of our partners. The entrance had been filled in and Sheila was there to cast her expert eye over the situation. There were no signs of foul play, and some detective work told us the cows on the site had most likely filled it in with their hooves.

Sheila has been monitoring the setts on the site for around 20 years, and her recent survey in January 2022 showed that almost all of the large sprawling setts were active. 11 months later there was a very different picture. Of the five setts we looked at, only two were now active. The site is on the edge of the White Peak plateau, one of the most intensively farmed areas of the Peak District where extensive badger culling activity has taken place this year. We must recognise this loss of badgers as a direct symptom of the government-funded cull.

Despite an end to the badger cull coming in 2025, our most iconic mammal is still at risk, with the numbers of animals allowed to be slaughtered in the tens of thousands per year. DEFRA retains the right to increase the number of badgers culled at their discretion. It is not clear what the future holds for our beloved badgers at this stage but we will provide updates on our website as soon as we have them.

On one of the first frozen winter mornings back in December, Dave Savage, Landscape Recovery Manager for the Peak District at Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, met Sheila, a long-standing badger volunteer who has spent thousands of hours over many years monitoring badgers around the Peak District. Here Dave tells us about the meeting and updates us on what lies ahead for badgers this year:

Badger: Photo: © Andrew Parkinson 2020 Vision

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's VISION FOR NATURE'S RECOVERY

Rachel Bennett –
Head of Wilder
Landscapes

Our vision is landscapes rich in wildlife, valued by everyone. A thriving natural world, with nature playing a valued role in addressing the climate and ecological emergencies, and everyone inspired to get involved in nature's recovery.

To achieve our vision and goals, our whole team of staff, volunteers, local communities and supporters work tirelessly.

OUR GOAL
is that by 2030:

- 33%** of Derbyshire will be managed for wildlife
- 1 million** wild connections are made each year
- 1 in 4** people will act for wildlife
- The trust is **carbon positive**



Pine marten (Martes martes) youngster climbing. Photo: © 2020 Vision

We manage some of the best nature reserves and wildlife habitats in the county. Our work protecting and improving these sites will always remain integral to our achieving our goals and are a vital part of ensuring our most vulnerable wildlife does not disappear forever. However, our nature reserves have increasingly become the last remaining fragments of wildlife habitat within a degraded landscape. These areas must be managed as the foundational building blocks for nature's recovery, and as spaces for people to join us and create relationships with nature within their communities.

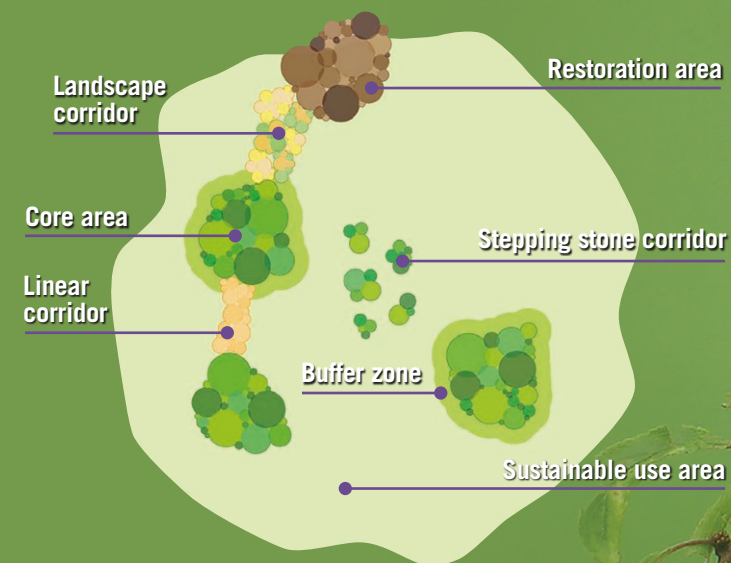
Our evidence-based approach to nature's recovery follows the guidelines outlined in the Lawton review (Making Space for Nature, 2010), making more space for nature through the principles of **better, bigger, more and joined up**. We work to restore, expand,

and connect nature reserves that are small and isolated, working in partnership with landowners, farmers, developers, and local authorities to ensure more land is managed for nature. We seek to improve the way our nature reserves interact and integrate with the wider land and with local communities, where they can play a role in linking together wildlife and people.

Ecological connectivity is critical. From the science of island biogeography we learn that islands suffer more easily from species extinctions because of their isolation. For example, if there is an external ecosystem shock, such as fire, flood or drought, species may disappear from that individual island. That's okay if species can recolonise from the surrounding landscape. If our nature reserves are islands, and extinction occurs, then natural recolonisation won't take place.

Red-backed Shrike. Photo: © Stefan Johansson

The components of ecological networks Lawton, 2010





Wild boar sow (Sus scrofa). Photo: © 2020 Vision

It's also really important to recognise the importance of complexity as a way of increasing ecosystem resilience, which leads to our focus on rewilding as our strategy for managing our land. This complexity, found in functioning ecosystems, leads to strong emerging properties, making more space for nature and allowing nature to lead.

We know that the loss of keystone species has contributed to a collapse in biodiversity and complexity. By reinstating these species, complexity and biodiversity can be restored. Wild herbivore reintroductions are therefore essential for rewilding, utilising either wild species, or a proxy for those that have gone extinct, like aurochs and wild horse. Native breed cattle, ponies and iron age pigs, can play the role of these lost species.

As well as keystone species such as beaver, the introduction of umbrella species, those which need conditions which are also required by other species, are those we will focus on reintroducing. These include species such as pine marten, golden eagle, red-backed shrike, dung beetles and black grouse.

Species recovery projects will also be essential to restore Derbyshire's nature. These once common species have declined due to habitat fragmentation and land use changes. For example Derbyshire is recognised as one of the top three counties in the country for willow tit, Britain's fastest declining resident bird, which has suffered a 94% decline in numbers since the 1970s. They require scrubby woodland, a habitat that will benefit from a landscape rewilding approach.

Across the county we've identified four landscape recovery programmes, each of which has an emerging landscape recovery plan which is where we're focussing our efforts. These are **Wilder Cities**, **Wild Peak** in the north, **Wilder Trent** in the south and the **Derwent Living Forest** which connects them. (see pages 12–19)

Our living landscapes in these programme areas help to provide us with a focal point, with a living landscape officer in each. This is where our reserves are connected to the wider landscape, where we build relationships with stakeholders and seek potential for land acquisition to extend our existing reserves.

An example of how this approach is delivered is through the development of landscape-scale partnerships. In the Wye Valley in the Peak District, collectively conservation organisations own over 600ha of land. Following the Lawton principles, the priorities within these core areas is to make them "better", working collaboratively with others to a shared vision for nature's recovery.

See pull out map enclosed in the magazine.

We can only make an authentic contribution to tackling the climate and ecological emergency by ensuring our own house is in order. As owners of land, energy users, consumers of water, vehicle fleet operators and consultants (to name just some of our services), we recognise that we need to lead by example in how we manage our own environment and community impacts.

I want to share with you a couple of examples of what we are doing to achieve this. In 2023, we will be retiring our diesel and petrol vehicle fleet. Our new vehicle fleet will be made up of a mix fully electric, hybrid, economical diesel 4x4s and a couple of e-bikes. The electricity we buy to power these comes from 100% renewable sources, meaning that this will help us to significantly reduce the carbon emitted whilst carrying out operations around the county.



Highland Cattle. Photo: © Kevin Caster

We're also working with the Wildlife Trusts to identify ways to reduce the impact of the livestock that graze our nature reserves. The livestock we utilise to manage our nature reserves are essential to replicate the activity of lost wild species of large herbivore. Some of these species, such as cattle, are well known for generating lots of greenhouse emissions. We are investigating ways to minimise the emissions from our herbivores, for example through looking at the types and breeds of animals that graze our sites and looking at how a small number of domesticated livestock could replicate the lost migratory herbivory of their wild counterparts, across all of our reserves.



Photo © Jon Hawkins - Surrey Hills Photography

Wild PEAK

Ruth Pilbeam –
Rewilding Projects
Officer

Recent years have shown us the alarming effects of global warming, with flooding across the region, stifling heatwaves and rapid losses of Peak District wildlife. Local people have been hard hit, especially farmers and land managers who bore the brunt of these natural disasters. Nobody wants to live in, or contribute to, this crisis, but without collective action, people feel helpless to create change. We want to put an end to this stalemate, and work together to create a **Peak District fit for the future**.

Wild Peak is one of the Trust's 4 key areas in our programme for nature recovery in the Peak District, supporting hundreds of land managers to act for wildlife. We want to reclaim our natural landscapes, protect ecosystem services and create a nature-based economy for wildlife and for people. The programme is working towards creating, restoring and connecting wild spaces across the region – working with and between existing programmes and conservation sites to create a nature recovery network.

While our reserves are havens for wildlife across the Peaks, we cannot work in isolation, and to create nature recovery at a landscape scale, we look to our neighbouring land managers to work with us. We want to recognise the work that they're already doing for wildlife, support them to develop their projects, and use their successes to encourage more people to pledge their land to be managed for nature. And we want everyone to be celebrated and properly compensated for their efforts!

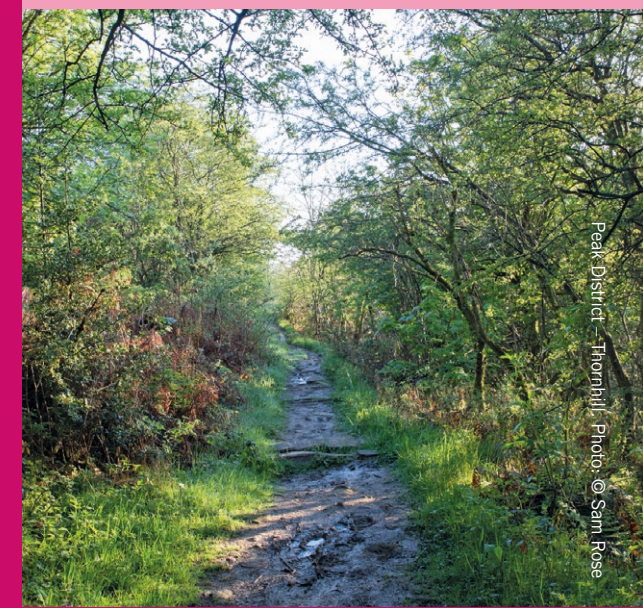
The team have been working to deliver bespoke advice and management plans since 2019, with work behind the scenes focussing on opportunity mapping for habitat restoration, reintroduction of feasibility studies and research into a combination of public and private funding mechanisms that we hope will empower land managers to pursue nature recovery. In November 2022 we also launched a network to better share knowledge between the 44 landowners and 1142 hectares currently engaged.

The Wild Peak network shares monthly newsletters signposting members to resources, including specialist advice, funding schemes, expert-led workshops and regular knowledge-share sessions. Members can also benefit from visits and reports from our nature recovery advisors, and issues raised are addressed in workshops with further support on individual projects when needed.

Using the network, we hope to identify opportunities to connect people and wildlife across land boundaries. In one such initiative a local group of land managers have employed rewilding techniques on their land and share equipment and resources. The group joined Wild Peak for support and contacts to expand their work. Connecting with other members in the area, and in correspondence with the local council, we hope to create a 5km wildlife corridor, linking up over 250 acres of land for wildlife.

Elsewhere, a churchyard is nurturing pollinators, a community is rewilding a quarry, and a teacher is leading a forest school in an outdoor classroom. Farmers are campaigning for nature-focused subsidies and are finally being compensated for the carbon they capture, the water they filter, the regeneration of their soils. Local authorities have listened to their constituents and are creating strategies for nature recovery on public land. The tide has turned and land managers across Wild Peak are putting themselves at the front of the fight to deliver a resilient landscape.

But time is against us, and we're facing huge barriers, including insufficient funding, pressures from resource extraction, and poor public knowledge of the damage caused by our bare landscapes. We have our work cut out! To address this, Wild Peak will use rewilding principles to restore natural



Peak District – Thornhill. Photo: © Sam Rose

processes, giving nature space to recover in an affordable and sustainable way, while providing ecosystem services to support local people.

We are able to deliver this work with help from others. Porter Pizza, a local business, has sponsored Wild Peak to generate woodland projects, choosing to offset their firewood locally despite no legal obligation. This has already led to the creation of a potential 15+ hectare cross-border woodland enhancement project controlling invasive rhododendron and planting native trees to counter ash dieback. We hope to attract other local businesses to take up this challenge and work out what eco-service is most relevant to them.

Our achievements rely on the actions of local people, the ones who will be rewarded with a resilient future. We want to work together to restore our landscape for wildlife and for people. If you would like more information on missing species and habitats, if you have concerns about the management of a wilder landscape, or if you would be happy to advocate for Wild Peak in your community, then please reach out! You can talk to our team via wildpeak@derbyshirewt.co.uk

WILDER CITIES



**Katherine Clarke – Strategic Lead
– Urban Rewilding**

As one of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust’s key focus areas, our vision for Wilder Cities is for wilder towns and cities abundant with wildlife where nature and people are thriving together. We want to work with natural processes to lead nature’s recovery, address the climate crisis and improve people’s health and wellbeing through regular access to good quality nature experiences.

We know that time spent in nature is beneficial to our health, so in a county where approximately 80% of its residents live in urban areas, and as a nation who spend well over 90% of our time indoors, it’s important that we share our, sometimes seemingly barren, towns and cities with opportunistic nature! Nature is a skilful adapter and when given the opportunity, will happily share urban spaces with us which can result in amazing ‘up close and personal’ experiences in some unexpected places.

Nature flourishes best when it is not contained, so having corridors enabling it to move across our urban spaces is essential: it allows nature to travel to favoured spots to feed and shelter and, for those that travel further afield in winter, safe, resource-filled corridors in and out of the city. Towns and cities have some of the best corridor networks along road verges, trainlines, rivers and canals. These wilder spaces are some of the most



Allestree Park, speedwell. Photo: © Felicity Jackson

important places for nature in our urban areas, as are the landscapes they link together.

Marcus and Felicity, who both spend time caring for some of Derbyshire’s wilder urban spaces, tell us about the wildlife we could see at Derwent Meadows and Allestree Park this spring.

Marcus Militello, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust’s Derby Living Landscape Officer.

“Derwent Meadows reserve in the heart of Derby is a mosaic of habitats comprising wet and dry grassland, reedbeds, hedgerows, ponds and deciduous woodland. Listen out for the often heard, but rarely seen, cetti’s warbler with its staccato song. Six bat species have been recorded on the reserve and can be seen flitting along the tree lines and across the water from dusk during spring, summer and autumn, feeding on insects emerging from the pond and wet ditches. If you are lucky on a spring evening, you may see great crested newts displaying in the mats of floating vegetation fringing the ponds. Take a walk or cycle along the riverside and look out for grey herons, goosander, teal and the blue fleeting flash of a kingfisher.”

For more information see <https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/derwent-meadows>



Allestree Park, lady’s smock. Photo: © Jane Young

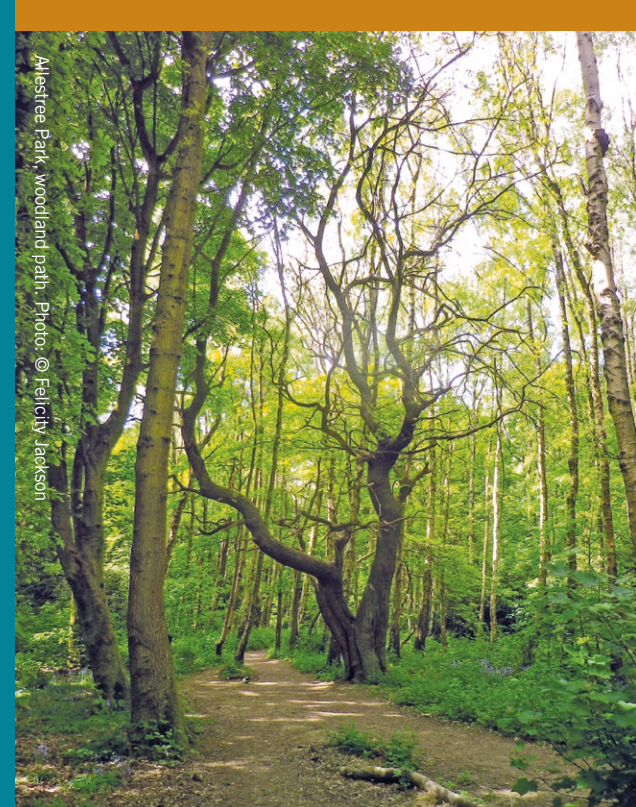
Felicity Jackson, Co-Chair of the Friends of Allestree Park.

“Allestree Park comes alive in spring. In the woodlands listen out for blackbirds, robins and blue, great and long-tailed tits nesting in the trees. Look out for the holes in tree trunks made by nuthatches and woodpeckers.

Under the trees, wood anemones carpet the ground whilst wild daffodils flower near Allestree Hall. In the grasslands lesser celandine and germander speedwell bloom, and forget-me-knots flower beside the hedgerows. In late spring, Big Wood is a sea of bluebells whilst kingcups (marsh marigolds) open in the edge of Burley Brook, together with lady’s smock.

Along the woodland edges and over the grassland, look out for small tortoiseshell, comma, peacock, red admiral, orange tip and brimstone butterflies. Bumblebees abound in Allestree Park, including the buff-tailed, white-tailed, red-tailed, early and tree bumblebees! Look out for a variety of solitary bee species nesting at the edges of the sand in what were once golf course bunkers.”

For more information see <https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/about/projects/allestree-park> or <https://www.friendsofallestreepark.org.uk/>



Allestree Park, woodland path. Photo: © Felicity Jackson



Allestree Park, tortoiseshell butterfly. Photo: © Felicity Jackson

There is a great deal more we can all do to make our towns and cities wilder, making space for nature where we live, work and play and creating safe corridors across our urban spaces. Let’s face it, what’s good for nature is good for us too! We know that having regular access to good quality nature experiences not only nourishes the soul, but it also improves our physical wellbeing when we get active in green spaces that have fresher air.



Beaver.
Photo: © Nick Upton

DERWENT LIVING FOREST WORKING WITH NATURE

Ellie Field Landscape Recovery Manager (Derwent Valley)

We are looking forward to continuing onto the next phase of our ambitious nature restoration work across the Derbyshire Derwent catchment. The next phase will see the development of the Derwent Living Forest, which will not only provide an extensive haven of quality habitat for wildlife but will also offer further ecosystem services such as natural flood management benefits and increased carbon sequestration to assist in adapting to and reducing the impacts of climate change. This exciting project sits within Derbyshire's largest living landscape, the Derwent Valley, at the heart of which the River Derwent flows with a catchment encompassing a total of 125,602 hectares. The programme's objective is to facilitate a natural process-led, wilder approach to managing the 260 hectares within our existing reserves. The drive is to evaluate this approach as a pioneering method of offering natural solutions to the impacts of climate change, to provide data to assist in the development of a nature-based economy and in turn contribute to a long-term legacy of a more resilient, sustainable, and wilder Derbyshire.

The Derwent Connections Programme holds a 30-year vision to provide connectivity between the National Forest and Northern Forest, in effect offering a habitat corridor from lowland to upland. The works will achieve this by encouraging an increase of 30,000 hectares of connected woody habitats throughout the Derwent Valley. In line with our wilder approach, as many

of these as possible will be established through natural regeneration. Encouraging this mosaic of wet woodlands, orchards, woodland, hedgerows, wood pasture, parkland and agroforestry will offer crucial opportunity for species range expansions in the face of climate change. The next phase will also focus on modelling opportunities for nature recovery networks, identifying areas at high risk of flooding, and building relationships with communities across the catchment which will be invaluable for the Derwent Living Forest.

The Derwent Living Forest will continue to focus on the creation and restoration of natural habitats, making space for nature to take the lead and allowing the development of vital transitional habitats, such as scrubland. This natural establishment of ecotones offers highly valuable habitat for a huge diversity of species and increases the resilience of ecosystems towards climate and ecological emergencies through more connectivity. Where these systems are adopted, data will be collected to further inform the scientific community's understanding of the ecosystem services provided by these habitat types, including impacts on carbon sequestration as compared to areas under more traditional management. Findings from these ecosystem services analyses can then be applied to one of the biggest questions facing the environmental sector currently: How can we use blended finance to support the development of a nature-based economy?

Lea Wood. Photo: © Kayleigh Wright

Highlights

- **Supporting a wilder approach** to managing reserves
- **Increasing connectivity** throughout the Derwent Valley
- **Facilitating evidence-based analysis** of ecosystem benefits
- **Informing and developing** blended finance structures
- **Working with nature**, not just for it



Fungus (*Mycena haematopus*).
© Vaughn Matthews

Learning the Lingo

Process-led management

Reducing intervention and allowing natural processes such as seasonal change, life cycles, animal behaviour and geological change to lead nature's recovery.

Ecotone

A region of transition between two biological communities. For example, an area of scattered scrub between grassland and woodland habitats.

Nature-based economy

Thriving income and employment based on the restoration and rewilding of nature, adding financial value to existing natural processes through increased opportunities and ecosystem services.

Ecosystem services

The many and varied benefits to humans provided by the natural environment and healthy ecosystems.

Carbon sequestration

The process of storing carbon in a carbon pool. A vitally important tool for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and thus the impacts of climate change.

Nature-based solutions

Sustainable management and use of natural features and processes to increase resilience and tackle socio-environmental challenges in a locally adapted, resource efficient way. Working with nature, not just for it.

Blended finance

The strategic use of varied funding sources including private investment, philanthropic, and public funding resulting in positive outcomes for both investors and communities.



Wet woodland. Photo: © A Cornack

Timeframe

- **0–5 years:** Facilitating and evaluating rewilding as a nature-based solution on our reserves
- **6–15 years:** Applying findings to the landscape restoration of 10,000ha of land
- **16–30 years:** Scaling this up to a further 20,000 hectares of Wilder Derbyshire



Woodland. Photo: © Ertina Bradshaw

Wilder TRENT

**Matt Buckler –
Director of Natural Solutions**



Kingfisher

The River Trent is the third longest river in the United Kingdom and flows through Staffordshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and the South of Derbyshire through Willington and through to Aston on Trent.

The Trent Valley historically had a series of wetlands along its length: wet woodlands, reedbeds, swamps and fens. In recent years, wetlands are coming back, many resulting from restored sand and gravel extraction sites. All of these sites perform a series of vital roles, both for biodiversity and through the provision of ecosystem services and this is why Wilder Trent is one of the four key focus areas for the Trust.

Recently, the Trent Valley corridor has been characterised by farming, sand and gravel extraction, industrial pollution, enormous power stations and, most recently, huge development pressure.

But it needn't be like that in the future.

Imagine the valley as a haven for wildlife, where beavers shape the landscape and rare species like bitterns are encouraged to return. Imagine an attractive, living landscape of wet woodlands and seasonal flood plains, which would alleviate the risk of harmful flooding downstream and store vital carbon to mitigate the effects of climate change, with vibrant communities and an expanding visitor economy.

We believe all this is possible, reinstating natural processes alongside a still-cultivated and lived-in landscape, with an increasingly nature-based economy.

Briefly, the main points of our proposal are:

- **A joined-up approach to development and restoration of mineral extraction sites**
- **Improving river valleys and adjacent flood plans for the benefit of wildlife**
- **Improving water quality**
- **Reducing flood risk**
- **Securing carbon sinks to mitigate climate change**
- **Providing access to nature and recreation for local people and visitors**



Osprey



River Trent

Our partnership

We led on the development of the partnership, including local authorities (including Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire County Councils), charities (eight Wildlife Trusts, RSPB, Trent Rivers Trust) and statutory bodies (Natural England, The National Forest Company and the Environment Agency), corporate organisations including Cemex, Tarmac, Hanson and Severn Trent). We want to develop the initiative much more widely to include all of the local authorities, local, regional and national businesses and, most importantly, the communities within the area.

Our Goals

The diverse nature of the land use within the catchment area means it is impossible to rewild all of it. Our aim is firstly to fully understand the ecosystems, and then to work with local authorities to produce a framework for development which recognises the value of the natural world.

This would include a joined-up approach to restoration, expanding the area and connectivity of habitats within the valley, with new areas of open water, flood plain meadows, reedbeds and woodland. We would like to restore or create a series of extensive wetlands, joined with the rivers and canals which criss-cross the valleys, to allow movement of a host of different species.

These could include eel, lamprey, salmon, sturgeon, geese, ducks, swans, cranes, bitterns, beavers and otters. This vision of a much wilder, but still cultivated, landscape could become an important visitor destination, providing areas for recreation, access to nature and tranquillity to a significant proportion of the UK population. It will allow communities to have access to nature on their doorsteps, improving health and well-being. The landscape will still be producing food and places for industry (including transport and mineral extraction), but with a backdrop of a nature-based economy, maximising the benefits that the natural world provides to society and providing more space for wildlife.



Eurasian crane

Legacy Giving

Your love of nature can live on

Gifts in wills have made an invaluable contribution to the work of the Trust for more than 60 years, ensuring future generations can enjoy the natural world. We would like to thank those that have helped us in this special way.

The countryside holds a special place in our memories. For those of us who grew up splashing in sparkling streams or bounding across sunlit meadows, it's where we were at our most carefree. Now, we remember the chirruping of darting birds, the heady scent of wildflowers, the timeless rural vistas, and trust that our children and grandchildren will always be able to enjoy such a glorious landscape.

How your gift could protect the wildlife you love for the people you love

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's vision is a county with more wildlife, more wild spaces and more people coming into contact with nature. But we can only

make that happen with the help of people like you. We especially rely on the gifts that kind supporters leave us in their wills. Your gift could help us purchase and restore a new nature reserve, or even help save a threatened species such as the dormouse or nightjar. You can be confident that your legacy, big or small, will make a real difference and will be put to good, use meeting the most urgent conservation needs. Leaving just 1% to Derbyshire Wildlife Trust in your will can make a huge difference.

What your gift could help us do

- Continue supporting the recovery of some of our rarest species.
- Care for our nature reserves and help others manage their land in a wildlife friendly way.
- Inspire young people about the natural world through our education activities.
- Stand up for wildlife across planning and policy so that nature is not taken for granted.
- Support our work across the county to create a Living Landscape.



Thornhill People. Photo: © Tim Birch



Our promise to you

We absolutely recognise your loved ones come first in your will.

We will never ask you about the size or type of gift if you decide to support our work this way.

You never have to tell us your intentions – we respect your right to privacy.

We fully understand that circumstances change and there might be a time when you need to take us out of your will. There is no binding commitment to us.

We promise to use your gift wisely, in line with your wishes.

Already made your will?

If you already have a will and wish to add a charitable gift, it is usually easy to do so using a form called a codicil. We do recommend using a solicitor for this to make sure it doesn't inadvertently change any other arrangements in your will.

Inheritance tax

Gifts to charity are tax free. If you leave a legacy to Derbyshire Wildlife Trust the value of the legacy is deducted from your estate before inheritance tax is calculated. This means your gift not only benefits the Trust, it can also reduce your liability to inheritance tax. Since April 2012 the rate of Inheritance Tax has been reduced from 40% to 36% on those estates that leave at least 10% of their value to charitable causes.

Anyone who cares about wildlife has a marvellous opportunity to do something quite unique, by remembering their Wildlife Trust in their will. This generous act is one of the most important things you can do to make sure the species and habitats we love will be there for future generations to enjoy.

- Sir David Attenborough, President of The Wildlife Trusts



Legacy pledge

Whilst many members and supporters may plan to leave us a gift in their will, very few tell us. However, as we plan for the future of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust it can be useful for us to know if people do intend to support us. We don't need to know any details other than that they intend to make a bequest. If you would like to let us know, please do contact us, using the details below.

Contact us

For more information about making or updating your will, we would always advise you to contact a solicitor in the first instance. If you would like to talk to someone and find out more about remembering the Trust in your will or to let us know about a gift you have already pledged to us, please contact Mark Heaven Head of Fundraising on **01773 881188**, email mheaven@derbyshirewt.co.uk or write to us at our main Middleton office.





Nextdoor Nature

Adam Dosunmu Slater – Community Organiser

The Nextdoor Nature initiative has begun, with our Community Organiser, Adam Dosunmu Slater, now in post. Based on the Team Wilder ethos of community empowerment towards a Wilder Derbyshire, with Adam's role about building on this within inner-city Derby.

Generously funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Nextdoor Nature will see Wildlife Trusts across the country enabling community groups and local people to take action for nature, in areas close to them. The work is focused on supporting lesser-represented communities and breaking down barriers to help improve people's access to green spaces and nature. Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's Community Organiser, Adam, is working with people who live and work in the

wards of Alvaston, Arboretum and Normanton in Derby.

Having previously worked at the Derby West Indian Community Association, a local community group that supports the black community in Derby city, Adam has a wealth of experience working with minority communities and has made this a key goal of Nextdoor Nature, as he strongly believes nature should be enjoyed by all. A key part of Adam's role is to meet with and listen to local residents to find out their thoughts and experiences of their local green spaces, and to find out what changes they want to see. Community organising is all about bringing people together for a common cause, to share ideas and make improvements that will benefit the community for the long term.

Much of the early work has been meeting key community groups, making connections and learning about the target areas of Normanton, Arboretum and Alvaston. Pleasingly, despite experiencing green deprivation, the Derby city area has lots of groups that understand the great benefits of nature for their community's wellbeing, such as the St James Centre who are using the Trust's advice to help design a community garden for their disabled users to create and maintain.

Other exciting projects have also come up. Adam is working with local groups and the Derby City Council to create a 'green corridor' between Normanton and Arboretum Park. The first stop on the corridor will be Society Place, a walkway with grass either side that has become a hotspot area for fly tipping. Derbyshire Wildlife Trust will work with local residents and Arboretum Primary's Forest

School to redesign this area to become a green oasis for wildlife and a place the community can take pride in.

Much of the future work will involve connecting different groups and building coalitions for a greener Derby city. Work has already begun with our partner organisations, linking up to work collaboratively on allotment projects, and the hope is that this type of work will continue.

Nextdoor Nature is funded until 2024, providing a good foundation for future initiatives for communities and nature in the Derby city area. Connections made between community organisations, friends of groups, Derby City Council and the voluntary sector will amplify progress towards making nature accessible for all and will be a catalyst for achieving our goal of 1 in 4 people acting for nature.



Spring WILDLIFE

Nick Brown – Enquiries Officer



Comma on pussy willow. Photo: © N Brown

For most people, spring means longer (and warmer) days, snowdrops, showy crocuses and perhaps the returning sound of birdsong.

Crocuses are widespread and indeed showy but look closer on a sunny day and you'll see the first bumblebees sipping nectar from their blooms.

By mid-March, most frogs and newts will have returned to their breeding ponds, though toads will only just be waking from hibernation and heading off on their dangerous, road-crossing crawls to their spawning sites – they select small lakes and larger ponds in which to lay their thread-like spawn.

Up on the moors, adders will be emerging. This species suffers badly when moorland is burnt. Disturbance by humans and their dogs is another cause of this snake's sad decline – not that they were ever common or widespread.

Pussy willows will be bursting into flower come April. I have one in my garden and every year its flowers draw not only bumblebees and emerging comma butterflies but also at least one chiffchaff returning to the UK and seeking out the tiny insects that the flowers also attract.

In my garden I also keep an eye on other early flowering plants such as lungwort, hellebores and mezereon for bees and the strange bee fly too with its long snout.

Stinking hellebore is naturalised on a few limestone cliffs while the rare mezereon (*Daphne mezereon*), with its showy pink flowers, is a 'proper' native.

I've tramped up and down the steep sides of the Via Gellia looking for it in past springs, but it can be seen more easily at our Miller's Dale reserve in the Wye Valley.



Adder. Photo: © Marc Whitlock



Mezereon crop. Photo: © N Brown



Mistletoe on lime tree, Allestree

Bird song is also an important indicator of the lengthening days.

I am particularly fond of the mistle thrush's song, always delivered from the topmost branches of tall trees.

Whereas the song thrush's song repeats each short phrase several times before the singer moves on to the next phrase, the mistle thrush's song has a much wilder quality and can be heard even on the roughest of days, hence its old name of 'stormcock'.

The mistle thrush is one of the very few species able to tackle ultra-sticky mistletoe berries. If you have a back-garden apple tree and want some home-grown mistletoe, March is a good month to buy in some berries and attach them to the apple's twigs.

To find out more about mistletoe and how to acquire berries and propagate them, search for the 'Mistletoe Matters' website.

Up on the moors especially, it is the song and calls of the curlew that herald spring for me.

Sadly, this species is in steep decline so that locating them is much harder than it used to be.

March is also the time when brown hares are boxing. We now know that this is when the females are fending off amorous males rather than males fighting with each other.



Hares boxing. Andrew Haslen

Hares are a favourite subject for artists, from Durer in the early 16th century to the present day.

Of course if you live deep in a town or are housebound, your chances of encountering many of the species I have mentioned will be limited but at least you can watch the webcams trained on the Derby Cathedral peregrine nest platform. The female should lay her eggs before the end of March with chicks hatching a month later.

With luck, by early May, you might have the return of screaming swifts to enjoy. Ted Hughes, the poet, wrote that when they return from deepest Africa 'you know the globe is still turning'.

Turning it will be, but sadly with ever more problems each year, such that we all need to redouble our efforts to do something to help.

That something could be planting more pollinator friendly plants in your garden or on your balcony, putting up nest boxes and actively supporting the Trust and also perhaps some of the smaller local groups.

Enjoy this spring, savour its returning wildlife and please do something, anything, to help if you are able. Each of us can, and must, play our part. Tomorrow is too late.

Derby Cathedral webcams:
www.bit.ly/derbyblog

FUNDRAISING

Hollie Davis – Community Engagement Assistant

We have just launched our brand-new Community Fundraising Pack and have opportunities for you to challenge yourself, get outdoors and help nature by raising money for Derbyshire Wildlife Trust!

To download our pack and learn more about the fundraising work that's happening, or that you can help with, scan the QR code here:



Stories and thank yous

There have been some fantastic stories of some of our incredible supporters who have done a variety of different fundraising events to raise money for Derbyshire's wildlife, and we'd like to give all of you a huge thank you as you really are making such a difference and inspiring other people to follow in your footsteps!

Recently, we had the incredible team at SPCC, who cycled an unbelievable 952 miles from Land's End to John O'Groats, raising money for Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and another charity. In total, they raised an astonishing £11,000, split between the two charities! The team were in regular contact with us throughout and after their achievement, we went to meet them and present them with our brand new Team Wilder 'giant cheque'!



We would also like to send a big thank you to our most recent fundraisers, Pat and Steph, who ran a fundraising event for Derbyshire Wildlife Trust for their Golden Wedding Anniversary. Special thanks go to their 10-year-old grandson, Henry, who told everyone about the work the Trust are doing and why they should donate!

Future Plans

In other news, we're launching our challenge-based fundraising events this year, including places for the Great North Run and the Manchester Half-Marathon. Spring is a brilliant time to get outdoors and explore nature, bringing brilliant opportunities to learn more about the outdoors, connect with like-minded people and improve our physical and mental wellbeing. If you're looking for a new challenge, to do something different or you are wanting to take action to help wildlife thrive across Derbyshire, then get in touch at wilder@derbyshirewt.co.uk.

We also have some other events and activities in the pipeline and always encourage ideas from you, so don't hesitate to get in touch to discuss any ideas or interest in creating your own fundraiser or enquiring about future events!

We really are excited to see the achievements from our fundraisers this year and celebrate with you in your successes. With several events coming up and our new fundraising pack, there really is no limit in what we can achieve, and we are very excited to have you on board soon!

Birthday Fundraiser

Did you know you can set up a fundraiser for your birthday?

It's a simple, yet very effective way to help nature across Derbyshire by asking people to donate for your special day! Simply:

- Visit the Facebook fundraising page
- Click on 'Select Charity' – we're listed as Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
- Choose how much you want to raise
- Decide when you'd like your birthday fundraiser to end
- You can edit the text or the image – and then just click 'Create'

Ideas of Fundraisers

No matter your strengths, interests or location, there's something for everyone!

- Wild Garden Party
- Cake sale
- Wild fancy dress
- Sponsored silence or other events
- Give something up
- Coffee mornings
- Nature-themed walks/runs
- Quiz nights
- Auctions and raffles
- ...and much more!





Working for NATURE (Trainees)

This year sees the end of an innovative traineeship programme spanning four years, which supported people to gain skills and work experience in the world of nature conservation. We take a look at what the Working for Nature traineeship has meant for the trainees and also what it has meant for the Wildlife Trusts involved.

The Working for Nature traineeship partnered Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust to work collaboratively and provide 24 traineeships to people wanting to work in the conservation sector who had not previously had the opportunity. Uniquely, trainees were provided with a monthly bursary to support them whilst completing the traineeship. Generously funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the programme enabled the trusts to recruit 4 cohorts of trainees to learn practical conservation skills alongside wildlife trust staff, getting hands-on experience, and to study for a Level 2 City & Guilds Diploma in Work-based Environmental Conservation to bolster their skill set for future employment. Each trainee worked directly with either a Living Landscapes Officer or Ranger at

their host trust, learning the vital practical conservation skills on the job. Experiences ranged from managing woodland, erecting fenceposts, re-building crumbled drystone walls, surveying dormice, birds and butterflies, herding cattle and getting knee-deep in waterways. Trainees learnt to drive tractors, operate brushcutters and chainsaws, and administer emergency first aid outdoors.

On top of the practical and academic skills acquired over the course of each year, trainees took up opportunities to work across various other conservation organisations and across different departments within the Wildlife Trusts. Examples of external work placements include Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Peak District National Park, Woodland Trust, Bolsover Woodland Enterprise, Community Gardens and Local Authorities.



Having four years of funding has been fundamental to the success of this traineeship. Not only has it allowed us to provide meaningful, paid traineeships to people who wouldn't ordinarily have the opportunity to enter the world of paid conservation work, but it has also allowed us to provide support to people who didn't believe they could access a career in conservation due to mental health issues, low self-confidence, lack of practical experience and no access to higher education.

Our 24 trainees have now completed the programme and kickstarted a wide range of careers and opportunities, including starting their own forest school business, ecological consultancy, working in marketing at the Wildlife Trusts, becoming a land operative with the local authority, and 5 have secured careers within Wildlife Trusts. Several have also taken the opportunity of further education and training by completing apprenticeships and joining a MSc at university.

Providing quality, paid training opportunities like Working for Nature to people who have the passion and enthusiasm is essential to feed into the range of roles needed to keep standing up for nature. For so long, lengthy periods of unpaid voluntary experience and a degree-level qualification were expected for entry-

level positions. Only a select few who have higher education qualifications are also able to work for free – which means we have been missing out on people with real passion and ability to learn the skills to protect our natural habitat. This scheme has enabled us to turn tradition on its head.

Working for Nature has also kickstarted a push to plug the 'Green Skills gap' in the labour market by bolstering people's skills and qualifications, enabling them to move on to paid work. Internally DWT has amended our recruitment processes to provide more entry-level jobs at the living wage, created more progression opportunities, and widened our partnerships to advertise our paid roles to more people.

Creating affordable traineeship opportunities is now embedded into our work and we've been successful in receiving further funding to create more traineeships for the next two years. DWT is also now an accredited City & Guilds centre and will be offering the Level 2 Certificate in Environmental Conservation to more people across Derbyshire to support them in starting their own careers in the sector.

Read more about the scheme here: <https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/about/projects/working-nature>

WILD SOLUTIONS

Phoebe Cox – Consultancy Development Manager

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's consultancy has existed for over 5 years now. However, in the last year we've been hard at work developing a new approach to our consultancy, one that is solutions-focused and actively and holistically delivers against Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's core strategy and objectives. With our new approach comes a new brand: Wild Solutions.

Wild Solutions aim to provide end-to-end nature-based solutions to its clients, partners and stakeholders through any stage of an ecological challenge or opportunity, such as space that you would like to manage for nature.

We have core areas of work within Wild Solutions: **Nature Recovery Advice**, **Wilder Contracts** and **Ecosystem Service Provision**.

Our **Nature Recovery Advice** team purpose is to advise and influence others through the provision of surveys, management and restoration plans and nature recovery strategies. This normally includes a review of the land to identify opportunities and mechanisms to facilitate nature's recovery and improve conditions for wildlife on their land and in the wider landscape.

Our advice team work with landowners and organisations of all sizes, from private landowners and community groups to our local councils and large national and regional organisations.

Additionally, our Nature Recovery Advisors work across the Trust, advising on and delivering several landscape-scale projects and programmes.

Our **Wilder Contracts** team specialise in the creation and management of nature-rich spaces across Derbyshire, such as creating or managing new habitats. They work on both a one-off basis and through on-going site management for a broad range of habitats, from woodlands, ponds, and grasslands to the built environment.

We have several clients who we have worked with for multiple years and through our relationships have transformed their sites into spaces that both their employees and local wildlife can enjoy.

The third area of Wild Solutions is **Ecosystem Service Provision**, which specialises in the delivery of high-nature, low-carbon habitats providing a broad spectrum of essential ecosystem services.

Resilient, healthy functioning ecosystems deliver a huge number of vital benefits to the communities around and within them. These benefits include natural flood management and water cycling, carbon sequestration and storage, as well as cultural and social services, such as the benefits for health and well-being. Whilst Derbyshire Wildlife Trust have been delivering



Female great crested newt



Ragged-robin (Lychnis flos-cuculi)

ecosystem services for 60 years through the land that we own and manage, the passing of the Environment Act 2021 and the 25-year Environment Plan now mean that the value of nature as something that society has to have has finally been recognised. With this change have come new opportunities to generate an income for the Trust, to do more of our work, making nature-rich spaces for people and nature.

Our approach to delivering ecosystem services is all about rewilding land of low ecological value, land that is of low value to nature and provides limited value to wildlife.

Using natural regeneration and nature-based solutions, we will revegetate these sites and develop resilient ecosystems which provide a broad number of services to society, including Biodiversity Net Gain Units.

Please get in touch if you are interested in any of the services mentioned or would like to work with us to develop a 'Wild Solution' to your ecological challenge or opportunity.

wildsolutions@derbyshirewt.co.uk

GLOSSARY

ECOSYSTEM = a geographic area where plants, animals, and other organisms, as well as weather and landscape, work together to form a bubble of life.

ECOLOGICAL = of or relating to the environments of living things or to the relationships between living things and their environments.

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS = working with nature to address societal challenges, providing benefits for both human well-being and biodiversity.

BIODIVERSITY = the variety of animals, plants, fungi, and even microorganisms like bacteria that make up our natural world.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN = is an approach used to improve a site's biodiversity value. Once applied, a completed site will have a positive ecological impact, delivering improvements through habitat creation or enhancement after avoiding or mitigating harm.

REWILDING = letting nature take care of itself, enabling natural processes to shape land, repair damaged ecosystems and restore degraded landscapes.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE = is based on protecting and enhancing nature and natural processes – this could be rain gardens, permeable pavements, green roofs and appropriate bird or bat boxes.



Living Landscape Advisor conducting a botanical survey

A MASSIVE THANK YOU



We would like to say a huge thank you to Brian and Margaret who are sadly leaving the 50/50 club, at the end of this year, where they have been at the helm for over 10 years!

Brian and Margaret will be hugely missed! They have done incredible work for the local group and for DWT over the last decade and have always done it with such good humour and grace. The funds from the 50/50 club have been used as 3rd Party Contribution funds many times which in a nutshell covers the 10% that landfill credits cannot – if we apply for £50,000 we need to find £5,000 from an independent source, so their fundraising efforts have enabled us to access £100,000 over the years!

Some of the stand out projects where their efforts have been invaluable were supporting £46,000 of access and interpretation works at Woodside Nature Reserve, £32,000 of biodiversity improvements to wet grassland habitat at Erewash Meadows nature reserve and a smaller but still very important



Brian and Margaret Hobby with Kate Lemon, Regional Manager (Erewash & Trent Valley)

£20,000 of path and access improvements to Oakerthorpe Nature Reserve. I have always enjoyed catching up with them both, posing with giant novelty cheques and discussing which project their fund raising efforts would support this time. We are incredibly grateful for their support and wish them all the very best.

Kate Lemon

Working together for wildlife

50/50 Club winners

Congratulations to recent winners!

Dennis & Janet Smith, Julie Louth, A M (Mary) Cleminson, Dr David Gibbons, Wallace Gowing, Colin Baxter, Chris Budworth, A E A Fletcher MBE, Jacquie McKay.



Working in Partnership

BUXTON BREWERY

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust have teamed up with Buxton Brewery to create a new beer to celebrate the successful reintroduction of beavers into their natural habitat in Derbyshire.

The beer is called 'Dam Fine IPA' and is a 4% Session IPA. It has been designed to have a broad appeal to all beer fans and a donation for every can and pint sold will be made to the Trust to support our work.

Geoff Quinn, MD of Buxton Brewery, said, "Developing this beer to support the DWT, and in particular the beaver reintroduction, has been an absolute privilege. We are very proud to be corporate partners of the DWT and hope we can help raise some valuable funds for them from the sale of Dam Fine IPA."

For more information about how corporate partnerships can benefit your company and employees while supporting nature, please visit <https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/become-corporate-member> or email phodges@derbyshirewt.co.uk

We are proud to be working in partnership with:

- Absolute Networks
- Aggregate Industries
- BASF
- Big Wild Thought
- Bowmer Bond Narrow Fabrics Ltd
- Breedon Group
- Buxton Brewery
- Buxton & High Peak Security Services Ltd
- East Midlands Railway
- EPC
- G F Tomlinson Group Ltd
- Grangers International Ltd
- Henry Boot Plc
- Holdan
- HSE
- JC Deceaux
- Longcliffe Quarries Ltd
- M A Broughton Electrical Contractors Ltd
- MITIE
- Nestle Waters
- Northern Rail
- Platinum Electrical Ltd
- Porter Pizza
- Rock Fall UK
- RSK Adas Ltd
- Seven Trent
- Tarmac Trading Ltd
- Tec-Ties Ltd
- Toyota Motor Manufacturing (UK) Ltd
- Travel Chapter
- Trent Barton
- Weleda
- White Peak Distillery
- Wienerberger Ltd



If your business would like to get involved, please get in touch on: enquiries@derbyshirewt.co.uk

My WILDLIFE

Interview by Gemma Bradley – Press Officer

Rhiane Fatinikun founded Black Girls Hike in 2019 to provide a safe space for Black women to explore the outdoors and reconnect with nature. I sat down with her to find out how this inspiring walking group has grown to host group hikes, outdoor activity days and training events nationwide.

Have you always enjoyed being outdoors and hiking?

I got into the outdoors back in 2019. I was working at the Job Centre, unsure of what I wanted to do and felt like all my friends were in the fast lane and I was in the slow lane. All I kept thinking was, 'I'm procrastinating and wasting my time'.

Then one day, I was on the train going through the Peak District and I was watching all these people getting on an off in all their hiking gear and I thought to myself, do you know what, I'm going to take up hiking! A couple of days later I set up an Instagram profile and it just went from there.

Why is it so important that groups like Black Girls Hike exist?

I called the group Black Girls Hike because I had previously done community work with marginalised communities and understood there were barriers to getting outdoors, and I wanted to create a safe space for everyone to enjoy it.

There are so many people that don't have that much exposure to the outdoors or have never been hiking and think they're going to be judged for not having outdoor skills.

They associate the outdoors with words like 'endurance' and 'challenge' and feel alienated by them. I wanted to change that narrative and push the culture forward.

Let's not forget, we are in an environmental crisis, and black and brown communities are impacted by this, so it is really important that we are engaged in this and our voices are heard. But if people don't have a relationship with nature they don't necessarily see that as their battle to take on, and, really truly, everybody needs to be involved.

What challenges have you faced since starting Black Girls Hike, and how did you overcome them?

When I first started I just thought, 'oh this is a group of friends just going hiking together', but the group was like, 'no, you're the leader!' I didn't necessarily see myself as a leader or have those leadership skills, but then I started to develop influence and needed to be more mindful of that.

I also needed more knowledge. When I started, I couldn't read a map or use a compass. Then when I started working with other outdoor organisations and holding them accountable, I needed to understand the wider context of how it all joined together.



Rhiane Fatinikun
© Chris Johnstone

Black Girls Hike Group



Black Girls Hike Group

Unfortunately, online trolling is something I've had to deal with, which in the beginning did impact my mental health. I used to take it seriously, take it personally, but now I just don't read those comments.

What more needs to be done to make the outdoors somewhere everyone can enjoy?

Within outdoor organisations, I would like to see that inclusion is not necessarily an add-on, but that it's included in every decision that they make.

What has been your biggest highlight since starting Black Girls Hike three years ago?

A massive highlight was quitting my job to focus on Black Girls Hike. It's been transformational for me. I am much more positive and I've gained confidence. The outdoors is now my office and I enjoy having that space where I can go to collect my thoughts and plan things. It has been a journey of self-discovery.

We recently became an approved provider for mountain training which means we can now deliver navigation courses, and that's really important because there is not much diversity in terms of outdoor leadership. We also started international trips this year. We've been to Madeira and we're going to Ghana next year.

We've won several awards and accolades, including the Royal Geographical Award in 2022 for enabling and empowering Black women and girls to connect with and enjoy being in the outdoors.

What are your goals for Black Girls Hike over the next five years?

Our aim is to work with more people, more groups, particularly those who are hard to reach – such as those who don't have English as a first language, those who don't have access to the internet.

At Black Girls Hike our core values are education, inclusion and community, so the future is about continuing to do more meaningful projects and encouraging more people to get out into nature in a sustainable way.

BLACK GIRLS HIKE GUIDE TO GETTING OUTDOORS:

1. Find a local walking group to join.
2. Try volunteering with an organisation like Derbyshire Wildlife Trust – it's fun and will give you some extra knowledge.
3. Don't overwhelm yourself by reading too much on the internet.
4. To start with all you really need is a good waterproof jacket (UK weather is not always kind) and a decent pair of boots. You can pick anything else up as you go.
5. Start local – there are so many green spaces to explore right on your doorstep – challenge yourself to visit parks.

DWT Wilder Derby Event © Chris Johnstone



Derbyshire
Wildlife Trust

Leave a gift

FOR NATURE

“A legacy to your local Wildlife Trust is a very special gift that can do remarkable things to help the wildlife treasures on your doorstep.”

Sir David Attenborough

After providing for your loved ones, please remember the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.

When you are ready, we are here to talk.

01773 881188

enquiries@derbyshirewt.co.uk

www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk

