



DERBYSHIRE



Derbyshire
Wildlife Trust

WINTER 2020

www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk



Jo Smith
Chief Executive Officer



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On the cover

Fieldfare. Photo © Indy Kiemel Greene.

Wilder Derbyshire magazine is only made possible thanks to your continued and generous support

Editor: Joanne Carnell
Proofing: Luca Fossum
Design: Hammer Design
Copyright: Derbyshire Wildlife Trust 2020

Printed on 100% recycled paper.

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

Registered Charity Number 222212
Derbyshire Wildlife Trust is a company registered in England and Wales
Company Number 715675

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Derbyshire
Wildlife Trust

WELCOME

Our world is in trouble.

This is no secret. Wildlife is disappearing at an alarming rate - some are calling it the next mass extinction – and the threat of climate catastrophe is looming. We live in a time of emergency.

But there is still hope, we can tackle these critical issues, but we have to act now. Time is running out.

We need at least 33% of Derbyshire to be connected and protected for nature's recovery. Making more space for nature to become abundant once again will give our struggling wildlife the chance to recover and also restore beautiful wild places- places that store carbon, improve happiness and wellbeing and help to tackle the climate crisis.

33% is the bare minimum that nature needs to start recovering. The next five years are critical. It has to be a time of renewal, of rewinding our lives and of green recovery.

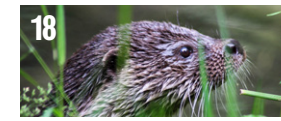
Over the next 5 years we will restore our moorlands, to store more carbon and become a home for threatened birds like curlews, golden plovers and hen harriers. We will create new wetlands and reintroduce beavers, to reduce the risk of towns and villages flooding and provide habitat for dragonflies and water voles. We will rewild our cities and towns, our road verges, our schools and our gardens to inspire and engage people and provide vital connectivity.

And perhaps most importantly of all we will become more diverse and more inclusive and we will empower, encourage and support individuals and communities to act, to make sure that wildlife is accessible to everyone, everywhere.

That's our vision.

Together we can make our vision a reality. Thank you for your support.

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Give today and protect tomorrow

#30by30

SPOTTED

Share your images with us

www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife/record-sighting

Stoat – Near Hathersage

Photo: © Peter Wilde



Dog Lichen

Photo: © Patricia Malcom Hilton



Speckled Wood

Photo: © Patricia Malcom Hilton



Honey Fungus

Photo: © Patricia Malcom Hilton



Otter – Erewash Meadows

Photo: © Roger Breen

We are busy beavering away!

A huge thank you for all the support we have received on our beaver release appeal.

Our plans to bring beavers back to the Trent Valley have moved a step closer thanks to a £75,000 grant from Biffa Award and a £65,000 contribution from Severn Trent.

In more good news, Natural England – the Government agency responsible for licensing the release and homing of the beavers – has reviewed and licensed the plans, and agreed that the Willington Area is large enough for two beaver families.

Preparing the reserve, trapping and then moving two beaver families from Scotland to Derbyshire was a huge and ambitious project at the best of times and with the complexity which has been added due to Covid-19, we're now not going to be able to complete it before the winter weather sets in.

We will keep you updated, but we are confident that our beavers will be here next year, hopefully in the spring!



National Lottery Heritage emergency fund grant of £157,300!

The funds are a lifeline to help us manage the impact of the ongoing coronavirus crisis.

Supported through The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the project will help us reopen reserves, develop the popular volunteer programme safely and move more activities online to help people stay in touch with wildlife.

When lockdown started we immediately lost much of our key income, and nature-saving work was put on hold.

Jo Smith, CEO for Derbyshire Wildlife Trust said;

"This National Lottery Heritage Fund grant is a very welcome game-changer for us and a significant

lifeline for the Trust during a worrying and very challenging time for us all. It will make a huge difference to the Trust and secure its future so we can get back to business, saving and improving Derbyshire's wild places and green spaces for wildlife and people who enjoy and depend on them."



Bearded Vulture holidayed in Derbyshire this summer



Vigo the bearded vulture had birdspotters flocking to Derbyshire this summer, and we were all in awe of her beauty and 2.5m wingspan! This is only the second time on record a bearded vulture has been seen in the UK and the first time in Derbyshire.

There was much speculation about Vigo's origin before the Vulture Conservation Foundation (VCF) provided the answers by analysing some feathers collected in the Peak District, which showed she came from the French Alps and had hatched last year in a wild nest.

The species had been hunted and poisoned to the brink of extinction, but following a long-running re-wilding project – which the VCF described as ‘one of the greatest wildlife comeback stories of our times,’ – the VCF said that there are now more than 60 breeding pairs of the species.

It is believed that Vigo has now left our shores to return to the Alps. The last probable sighting is believed to have occurred as she flew over Calais. Fly safe Vigo!

Badger Cull in Derbyshire

Thank you to all of you for your support to protect badgers. Over 6000 people from our county wrote to their MPs, but we were unable to stop the cull coming to Derbyshire. We are devastated that the Government's decision to extend the badger cull into edge areas where they have already funded our vaccination programmes. The effect on our work to protect badgers, help farmers and stop the spread of this disease has been badly undermined.

We have every sympathy with farmers whose cattle catch this disease – it causes so much hardship. Farmers have been poorly served by weak Government data which is used to support culling, and a failure to support better control of cattle movement.

Many landowners in Derbyshire have refused to let culling take place on their land. We will continue to vaccinate badgers and to work with and offer our support and advice to farmers and landowners.

Even with the restrictions we have had due to COVID we have vaccinated 204 badgers this year. Thanks so much to our badger vaccination team of volunteers who have worked tirelessly to support the program.



Our Vision

Where we are now

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust has doubled in size over the past five years and we have substantially increased our influence and impact. However, we are in the midst of a biodiversity crisis – a climate crisis. Wildlife continues to rapidly decline despite our best efforts and there is a growing disconnect between people and nature. Right now we are in the middle of another crisis – COVID 19. We need to ensure that out of this crisis comes a new normal, one which better enables nature's recovery and which in turn supports wider recovery.

Business as usual is not an option. The next five years are critical.

Where we are going

Our core purpose is to lead nature's recovery. We will be increasingly bold, brave and imaginative. But we cannot do this by ourselves. We will need to empower, support and learn from others more than ever before and we need to improve our resilience.

We strongly believe everyone has a role to play in nature's recovery. We will work together with communities, local authorities, businesses, landowners and organisations, supporting them to play their part.

New and exciting opportunities will be developed to enable everyone to notice and connect with wildlife.

As more people connect with wildlife we will build a growing movement of people who will collectively and collaboratively ensure a Wilder Derbyshire.

‘Business as usual is not an option. The next five years are critical.’

Pine marten. Photo: Terry Whittaker. 2020 Division.





'We will work more closely than ever before with existing and new partners, individuals and communities to ensure we collectively achieve a Wilder Future.'

Our goal is that by 2030:

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

How we are going to get there

We will deliver our mission by taking forward detailed actions linked to four main strategic objectives:

- 1 Lead Nature's Recovery**
Developing landscape scale programmes, nature based solutions, rewilding initiatives and protecting wildlife.
- 2 Inspire People to Notice and Care**
Ensuring everyone can experience and be inspired by nature, and the health and wellbeing benefits this brings.
- 3 Mobilise People and Communities to Act**
Developing 'Team Wilder', mobilising all to take action for nature, growing our membership and support and increasing wildlife activism.
- 4 Ensure an Agile and Influential Culture**
Encouraging an agile and ambitious culture and enhancing opportunities to enable us to be ever more diverse, relevant and resilient.



The full strategy document is saved here:
www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/our-vision





Carrifran Aug 2020. Photo: Borders Forest Trust.



Carrifran. Photo: Borders Forest Trust.

Carrifran 1999

But what does rewilding look like?

Often it's easier to understand something when it is visually represented, so here is one example:

When Carrifran Wildwood group took over the Carrifran valley in 1999, it was in a poor state from hundreds of years of sheep nibbling. The group planted half a million trees in its first decade of work. Expansion of the woodland from now will be more gradual and natural.

Sixteen years on and Carrifran in the Scottish Borders shows how bare hills can transform into a flourishing of woodland, colour and rich bird song. This is part of the Borders Forest Trust's rewilding initiative. What an amazing transformation; wildlife there now has protection and a home.

An Introduction to rewilding by REWILDING BRITAIN



Rewilding is at the heart of our latest appeal, and our newest reserve, Thornhill Carr, has allowed us to see first-hand the benefits rewilding can bring to wildlife and the areas surrounding it. We invited Rewilding Britain to give us a whistle-stop overview so we can all understand more about the benefits of this approach.

What is rewilding?

In short, rewilding is all about bringing nature back to life and restoring living systems.

Nature is our life support system: it's the air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink, the energy that sustains us. And it's in trouble. Wildlife is in dramatic decline. Species extinction and catastrophic climate change threaten all life on Earth. We must take action.

Nature has the power to heal itself and to heal us, if we let it. That's what rewilding is all about: restoring ecosystems to the point where nature can take care of itself, and restoring our relationship with the natural world. Reconnecting with what matters.

Rewilding can help nature and people flourish and thrive. It's our hope for the future.



Carrifran. Photo: Borders Forest Trust.

Carrifran 2015

What will this achieve?

Today nature in Britain is in serious trouble. More than half of our species are in decline and 15% is threatened with extinction. We've already hunted all of our top predators to extinction. Native woodlands cover a mere 2.5% of our land. Life has been torn from our seas to meet unsustainable demand.

Conservation workers have worked hard for decades, with passion and dedication, to save wildlife. But it's time to move beyond saving certain species and patches of nature. Rewilding takes a big picture approach, aiming to restore the wider natural processes that support life (for example, grazing, flooding, natural woodland regeneration). It complements existing conservation work and those sectors seeking a better way forward for nature, including regenerative farming, marine protection, low impact silviculture, nature tourism and so on.

Nature is a part of us. It's our life support system: the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, the energy that sustains us. We can't live without it. All plant and animal species play a role. When they disappear, when we disturb natural processes, our life support system starts to stutter and fail.

Climate chaos and the species extinction crisis are two catastrophic examples. They are symptoms of our disconnection from nature, the result of actions over centuries that have, largely unwittingly but sometimes knowingly, undermined our very ability to survive. If we thought we could unshackle

ourselves from the source of life, we can't. We thrive only if nature thrives.

Rewilding is an attempt to reconnect and reset, to reverse species extinction and to help nature flourish on a large scale. It is a chance to mitigate the worst effects of climate change. Our lives depend on behaving differently and embracing nature. We must think big and act wild. We need nature.

We desperately need nature in Britain to recover.

Many important species have disappeared from Britain over the centuries. This includes numerous birds and mammals. Rewilding can help bring them back.

Rewilding is about letting nature flourish. Over the long term, it can help to bring back important species such as the beaver and the lynx. These keystone species drive ecological processes. Their loss in Britain and around the world has impoverished our living systems.

Rewilding can empower rural communities to diversify their economies and plan for a future with new opportunities and minimal reliance on grants and subsidies.

Rewilding brings nature back to life in a way that excites people. It draws people in to connect with nature – to find peace or adventure, relax or re-energise, explore or rest. Rewilding areas provides opportunities for outdoor activities such as walking, viewing wildlife, hunting, fishing, and more. These create spin-off business opportunities that can attract people to live close to wild areas.

Heron. Photo: Roger Bradshaw.



“It's important that we work to ensure everyone has access to wilder nature, even in our urban areas”.

Benefits of rewilding

Draws down carbon from the atmosphere

We calculate that restoring and protecting native woodland, peatbogs, heaths and species-rich grasslands over a total of six million hectares could sequester 47 million tonnes of CO2 per year. This is more than a tenth of current UK greenhouse gas emissions.

Helps wildlife adapt to climate change

Rewilding key areas and connecting them through a mosaic of nature-rich habitats will allow wildlife to move and habitats to adapt as climate zones shift north. This has the potential to save a significant number of species from climate-driven decline or extinction.

Reverses biodiversity loss

Rewilding marks a change in direction, moving from continued managed decline to restoring the

abundance of Britain's wildlife and its missing species. We know nature will bounce back on land and in seas, rivers and lakes, but only if we take the right actions to help it.

Supports diversified economic opportunities

Rewilding has the potential to help rural and coastal communities prosper through nature-based enterprises, production and employment opportunities. This won't just happen by itself but will take imagination and coordinated local action to realise.

Improves our health and wellbeing

More nature is better for all of us, providing us with clean water, flood defences, food, healthy soils, breathable air, and good health. It's important that we work to ensure everyone has access to wilder nature, even in our urban areas.

Sapling Sunshine. Photo: Oskari Manninen.



Rewilding

Introduction

Rewilding in Derbyshire

Matt Buckler
Head of Nature Recovery Networks

Rewilding is about making more space for nature and bringing natural processes back to the countryside for people and wildlife, at a range of scales.

In the words of the American biologist Doug Chadwick, *“The essence of nature is wholeness – a wholeness woven from infinite complexity. Trying to save it piece by piece doesn’t really make sense even if we had all the time in the world, and we most certainly do not”*.

Every generation thinks that the nature since their childhood has reduced but it has been going on for generations. The fact that we can’t comprehend what we aren’t aware that we’ve lost is described as Shifting Baseline Syndrome.

Many of the species that have been lost need large areas of habitat and we’ve removed large amounts of it for homes, industry, infrastructure and agriculture. We’ve straightened and controlled rivers, drained wetlands and cleared woodlands. Spaces for nature have been pushed to the margins of our countryside, meaning that there is no longer the necessary space for many of these species.

What are we doing about it? In the Wye Valley, we look after six sites (Chee Dale, Millers Dale, Priestcliffe Lees, Cramside Woods, Deep Dale and Topley Pike). But there are sites owned by National Trust, Natural England, Plantlife, Peak District National Park Authority and Chatsworth which surround ours. If we worked together, allowing cattle to graze more extensively, mimicking the grazing behaviour of herds of large wild herbivores, could we reduce the intensity of management needed? This would lead to a much greater diversity and dynamism of habitats within the whole system; areas of very short grass, some much longer, and scrub and

woodland, which is great for breeding birds such as nightingales. We’re now working with our neighbours on a management regime for the whole of the Wye Valley SSSI, to see how far we can take this.

We’re working on the Wild Peak initiative with our colleagues from Staffordshire, Sheffield and Rotherham, Cheshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire, to see how we can create a patchwork of connected wild spaces with much more wildlife across the Peak District. The uplands of the Peak District is one of the most important places in the country for people to access the countryside. We think that they should be able to access wild nature too. We want to see many more trees, with areas of bog woodland as well as dense, moss-laden, temperate rainforest in the cloughs running off the moors, and we want bogs to be in good condition, with much more sphagnum moss and dwarf shrubs. We want to see eagles, ospreys, pine martens, black grouse and hen harriers, as well as ravens, lapwing and curlew. And we want to see the reintroduction of mammals that have been lost. Beavers and pine martens are hopefully coming soon, but why not polecat, lynx or bison as well? All of these animals once lived here and are coming back to other densely populated places in Europe. On the island of Mull, in Scotland, the reintroduction of white-tailed sea eagles brings in about £5million each year to the rural economy; what could bringing charismatic nature back do for the economy of the Peak District?

But natural processes here is not just about these big species. There is already lots of work being done across the Peak District – for example by the Moors for the Future partners, to reintroduce sphagnum moss and re-wet the blanket bogs on places like Bleaklow and Kinder Scout, which have been severely damaged since the Industrial Revolution by pollution and wildfire. Protecting and restoring peatlands is one of the most important things that we can do in the fight against climate change.

We’re looking at how we can connect the Wild Peak with the Trent valley, through the Derwent Valley Forest, with rewilding happening right the way along the river corridor with new woodlands and wetlands developing, including on open spaces in Derby. The development of large areas of new native woodland will not only allow the reintroduction of species such as the pine marten and red squirrel, it will also take carbon out of the atmosphere and slow the flow of water into the river, reducing the risk of flooding in Derby.

Our largest and most ambitious initiative is in the Trent Valley where we’re working with key local partners to try and improve connection between the North Sea and the cities of Stoke and Birmingham, by restoring thousands of hectares of new wetland habitat. This would have enormous benefits for society, holding back water on the

land, cleaning it and reducing the risk of flooding, as well as providing more space for people to connect to nature. As more habitat starts to develop, we hope that cranes, will start to come back. We will need to change how we manage land to allow the development of new large-scale habitats, and this will include working more with natural processes. This is one of the main reasons why we’re working on bringing beavers back to Willington, which act as ecosystem engineers. Historically our management of sites in the Trent Valley mimics some aspects of beaver behaviour. However, beavers do all of it and they’re there all day, every day. Ultimately, the Wildlife Trusts want to see beavers back where they belong, living wild across the country.

Rewilding is not about separating people from nature, but about reintegrating our society back into the natural world. We want to encourage people to connect their gardens together to allow movement of hedgehogs and toads. We want everyone to be involved, making more spaces for nature, in gardens, parks, allotments and churchyards and on farms. We believe that rewilding is a hopeful, positive vision for the future, which will see us working with others to bring nature back to our countryside, rivers and towns and cities. We hope that you’ll come and work with us.

Water vole © Terry Whitaker 2020/revision

Wildlife Champions

Do you want to create a wilder Derbyshire and help put nature into recovery? Would you like to inspire and help others with the same goal? Perhaps by leading a campaign or a community group to do something amazing for wildlife?

If you would like to find out more and be one of the first to join our team wilder training sessions then please email us at wilder@derbyshirewt.co.uk and tell us why you would like to be a DWT Wildlife Champion.





Dave Savage
Regional Manager (Dark and White Peak)

REWILDING AT ITS BEST

Our Newest Reserve, Thornhill Carr

Rewilding aspiration

At the end of 2019 Derbyshire Wildlife Trust became the proud owners of a new site in the Dark Peak. 'Wild Thornhill', or Thornhill Carr, is a 73-acre site found just south of Ladybower Reservoir and to the North West of Bamford. It is a site that is already rich with wildlife and which contains a fantastic mosaic of habitats that include meadows, thick hawthorn plantations and scrubby margins, all favourites of many different species, particularly insects and birds.

Ownership and funding

In 2019 DWT were approached by an anonymous donor who wanted to make a financial contribution to our conservation work. The donor generously offered a sum of money to enable us to demonstrate a rewilding approach to the management of sites by buying a piece of land. This proved slightly more difficult than we first thought, and we were outbid twice for land that would have been perfect. Third time lucky we secured Thornhill.

Our approach

Rewilding purists have asked us how we can show rewilding on an already wild site like Thornhill. There is no doubt about it, Thornhill is already wild, but what we can show there is a different approach to management. Our attitude to managing land in the past has been one of significant human intervention,

where we had regular practical work parties on sites throughout Derbyshire, preserving a site at a specific point in its evolution. For example, we may say that we are managing a meadow by cutting all scrub out of it, mowing it in the third week of July and grazing it in August because it contains a particular species or group of species. By having this very prescriptive approach, however, we may be limiting how the site develops, its biodiversity and its potential impact on the surrounding landscape as a rich source of wildlife.

First things first

Over the next year we will really get to know the site and what wildlife we already have there. We will work with local volunteers from Bamford, and our team of highly skilled ecologists to survey as many wildlife families as possible. This will include plants, insects (like butterflies, hoverflies and bees,) trees, birds and mammals. We will provide training to our local volunteers, enabling them to identify wildlife and create a species list so we are confident we know what is already there.

Armed with this information about Thornhill we can begin to develop a management strategy for the site. It will not be the traditional style of management plan where dates and times for intervention are set out in tables with targets, it will be a vision-style document that outlines what success will look like, and how, in much broader terms, we will manage the site.



Our rewilding approach

We want rewilding to happen across all of Derbyshire, to create a nature recovery network allowing safe environments for all of our beloved species, such as butterflies, birds and bees, and give them the opportunity to flourish. It would also be a safe home for new species to return, such as ospreys and red squirrels.

Natural processes

We will let natural processes to dictate the management at Thornhill, allowing the site to become wilder. One group of animals unfortunately lacking in Derbyshire are wild herbivores. These are important in cutting the grass and keeping the scrub from encroaching too much into the clearings. We have the occasional deer and lots of rabbits but nothing to cause the variation in grass lengths and bare ground that cattle cause. For this reason we may add very few animals for a short period of time to mimic this action. We will also monitor the wildlife at Thornhill to ensure that this new approach does not have a negative effect on its biodiversity.

You can help...

 More than ever before, we need nature, and more than ever before, nature needs us.

If you want to help us make this a reality across Derbyshire, donate and play your part in rewilding our world.

www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/support/give

Rewilding
Thornhill Carr

The Living Rivers Team: Scott McKenzie,
Debi Gibson, Tarun Ingvorsen & Kath Stapley

WHAT A LOT OF OTTER

One of the county's more elusive residents is the Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*). This nocturnal predator has had a difficult few decades.

Populations nationwide dramatically reduced due to persecution, and poisoning from agricultural pesticides entering the foodchain. By the 1970's they were mostly absent from England and restricted to a few pockets in Scotland and Wales. However, with tighter environmental regulations cleaning our rivers, they are making a national recovery and can now even be seen in some of England's busiest cities. It is one of the best examples of what can happen when we simply stop polluting our rivers and allow nature to recover.

Similar to the national story, otter sightings and numbers are increasing across Derbyshire. They are highly mobile and their ranges can span miles of riverbank. Although otters are rarely seen, signs of their presence are much more visible. They mark their territory by "sprainting": leaving faeces on prominent areas along the river – such as bridge footings.

Otter spraint is identifiable by its odour – likened to jasmine tea. You can take our word for that.... Mink, also present in our waterways, leave a much more unpleasant-smelling deposit. They also leave smaller footprints behind, with otter prints leaving traces of their trademark five webbed toes.

Otters are solitary creatures, unless breeding or with young. Females rear their kits alone, and the young can stay with their mother for up to 18 months. Kits need to learn how to swim and hunt successfully before they can establish their own territory. Otters are easily recognised by their chestnut brown fur, elongated body and a long, loping gait when running on land. They are much more at home in the water, forming a streamlined torpedo when swimming below the surface. Spending so much time in our chilly rivers,

means they need a way to keep warm. They have 70,000 hairs per cm² which helps keep them warm, as – unlike other water loving mammals, such as seals – they do not have blubber. For comparison, Huskies have approximately 600 hairs per cm²! Obviously with all that fur, otters spend a lot of their time grooming!

Otters are at the top of the foodchain in our rivers. They need good water quality in order to support their varied diet, which includes fish, crayfish, frogs and, occasionally, waterbirds. If otters are present it is a promising sign that the waterway is thriving.

It may not be immediately obvious, but riverside trees are incredibly important for otters. Fallen trees and exposed roots provide secluded areas for them to rest and breed. However, it's when the trees fall into the river that the real benefits begin.

A submerged tree can deflect the flow of water, removing silty deposits on the river bed and exposing the naturally gravelly bed of the river - ideal spawning sites for many fish species and invertebrate. Once the young of such species emerge, a veritable smorgasbord of prey is available for predators, which include other species of fish, invertebrates, amphibians, birds and, of course, otters!

But its benefits don't end there! The submerged branches become the ideal refuge for fish. With a mesh of wood around them, they have brilliant protection from predators.



Otter © Debra Gibson

Above: Otter Footprint & Spraint © Debra Gibson

Otter © Debra Gibson

Greater predator protection results in a greater abundance of prey: something that will not go unnoticed by an otter. Otters are intelligent, wily creatures and therefore will not exploit low prey numbers. If prey numbers are low enough to be unsustainable, then the otter will leave them be until the numbers improve again. When prey numbers increase in an area, the otter will start to take advantage of their abundance once more. It is also important to note that, as with the majority of predator-prey interactions, the weak and sick are the first to be taken, as they are impeded in their escape. This leaves healthier, fitter populations with stronger genes and fewer diseases.

If we did not encourage or provide habitat for prey species, there would be very little for otters to feed on, and they would look for other places to reside and hunt. Encouraging and providing habitat for the otter's prey species should encourage the expansion of their range into new or poorly visited areas. So leaving that fallen tree in the water can really help otters – who'd have thought it?!



How can you get involved?

If you would like to help monitor otter in Derbyshire, we'd love to hear from you.

Perhaps you live near a river, stream or canal, or would like the excuse to visit a watercourse every month or so? If so, there are opportunities to join our otter monitoring network.



Please email us at livingrivers@derbyshirewt.co.uk to register your interest.

We can get you trained up to identify otter signs near you.



GOING WILD

in Whaley

Geoff Evatt, Sunart Fields

On a rushed November morning, a snap decision had to be made: should Rachel (my wife) and I buy the farm-land adjacent to our house in Whaley Bridge, or not. All 120+ acres of it. Hillsides of sodden dairy grassland and crumbling dry stone walls; the chance to put into action a mantra: that those who can, should rewild. I was heading to Antarctica the following day for my research work, it was now or never.

Five months later, after thawing out from polar isolation and suddenly becoming an enforced 'home schooler' the results of our decision lay before us. We had just completed the purchase of the land and 'Sunart Fields' was born. But what next?



I would like to say that 'next' was us immediately seeing golden eagles return, all funded through yoga retreats. Instead, 'next' turned out to be docks. Millions of them shooting upwards from most of the fields like an army of nettle sting healers with no-one to heal. Mild panic caused us to ask the question of whether we should spray them away or plough the land? The rational, ecological and more economic-minded aspects of us said: 'Wait, let's see what happens.' And this is how we've proceeded these past few months. We've monitored the land as it begins to transition from its former dairy usage. In part, this has been through several wildlife surveys thanks to the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and Manchester Metropolitan University, but also through simply spending time on the land: fixing walls, clearing out old fencings, putting in new footpath signs and getting the place ready for pigs. Our two pairs of pigs are now doing the job of slowly turning over the grassland and docks. By Spring we hope that some of the native seed bank will be enjoying a re-emergence thanks to their clearance work.

Yet we're not adverse to helping speed time up a bit, as we hope to be planting some 50 acres

of native woodland on the plot next winter. In so doing carbon will be drawn down and the nutritional balance of the soil will be adjusted, without the need to spray. And to optimise the pigs' rooting, we manually spread the green hay from our established wildflower meadow into exposed soil.

The economics of the project is evolving as we expected, with parts resting on the Government's environmental grants and other parts involving local businesses and ecologists. With our cost-base incredibly low, we do not require huge revenues in order to make this financially viable. And with having a variety of strands of income, we hope to be reasonably diversified.

It is early days. Yet even in that time we have enjoyed seeing numerous hares, hearing the cuckoo calling, finding orchids and the rare Sheep's-bit Scabious hiding on the land. None of those are remotely to our credit. But it shows there is potential. A potential for nature to expand from its current small footprint and re-establish itself fully.

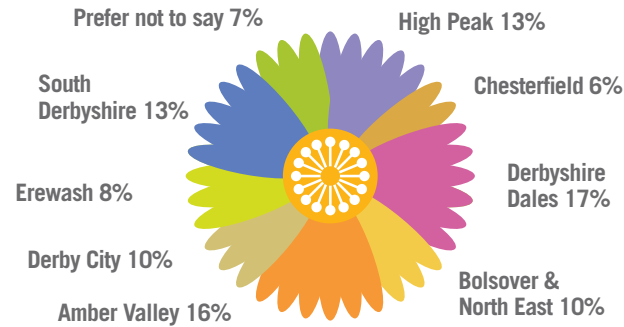
For regular updates from Rachel & Geoff
follow @sunartfields on Instagram and Twitter.

Nature Recovery Survey

We asked you to join the call for a Green Recovery by telling us what wildlife and nature mean to you in our nature recovery survey, your opinion is important to ensure we are focusing on the things that matter to you.

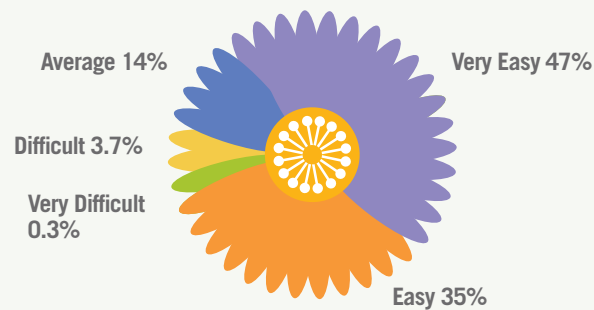
Thank you to the 950 of you who have responded so far, we would like to share some highlights below.

Respondents location

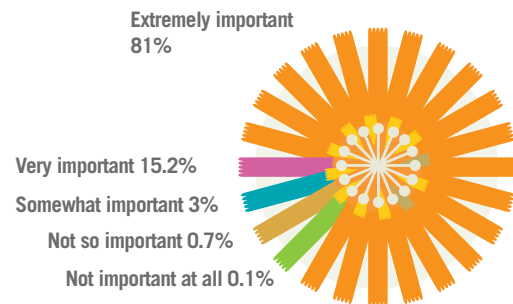


How easy is it to connect with wildlife where you live?

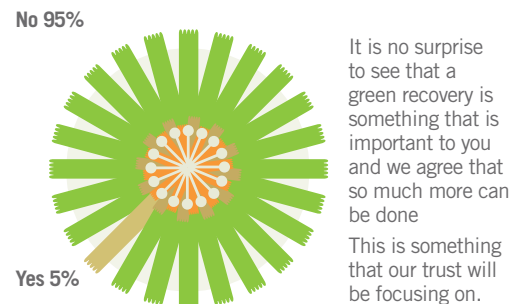
While only 4% of you indicated it was difficult to access nature, the true figure is likely to be much higher across Derbyshire residents. That is why ensuring everyone can access wild, green spaces near to them is a key part of our new strategy.



How important to you is a Green Recovery?

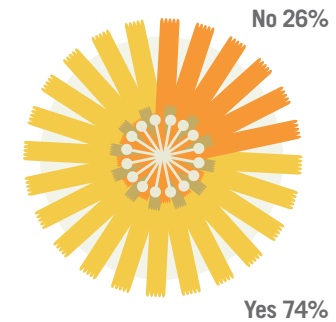


Do you think the government are doing enough to support a green recovery?

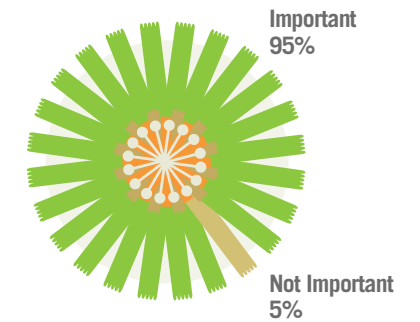


Have you noticed wildlife or connected with nature more than usual during lockdown?

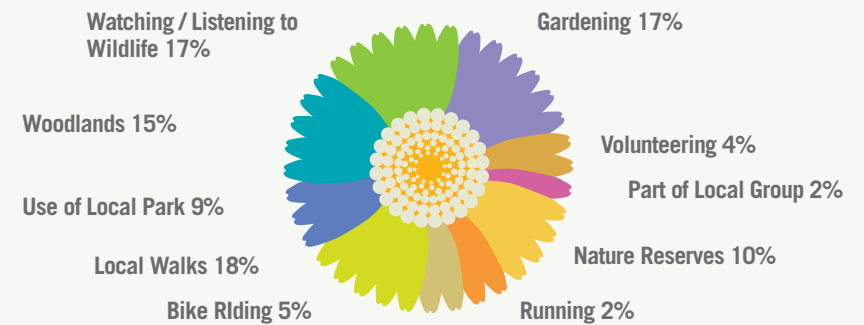
Lockdown has allowed many of us to slow down and connect with nature more than usual. As we move forward we hope everyone will maintain that connection and remember how important nature is to our well being.



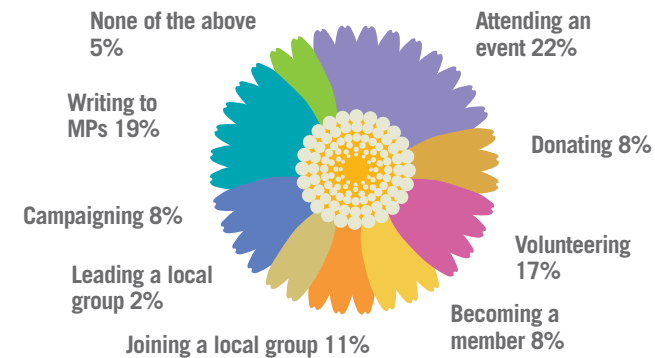
How important is nature to your wellbeing?



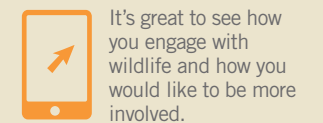
How do you engage with nature?



How would you like to get involved.



Get involved



It's great to see how you engage with wildlife and how you would like to be more involved.

Please visit our website for more information www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk

If you haven't yet filled in the survey and would like to please visit: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/B5BNYGV>



Making a difference in the COMMUNITY

Cromford Canal & Codnor Park Reservoir Group

Our founder and chair, Andrew Moon, a local resident and keen photographer, raised concerns with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust about the sluice at one of the locks on the Cromford Canal which had been leaking for some time. The water levels would drop to zero leaving it completely dry and then heavy rain would cause flooding, washing away moorhen nests and water vole burrows.

Once this was repaired, he asked if he could clear a little of the reed in an abandoned and neglected section of the canal. From this small seed, a group of volunteers were brought together and began work on clearing years of accumulated rubbish, litter, dog mess and building materials allowing more light in, encouraging cleaner water and, in turn, creating better habitats.



Phase One was hard labour. Dragging out of the water over 6 tonnes of debris such as old tyres, car parts, ferrous metals and dead trees. Within a few short months of the work beginning, though, the evidence that the area was regenerating was clear to see.

Now, almost seven years later, we are a constituted group of around 20 regular volunteers with a Management Committee of six individuals, each of us with clear, defined roles and responsibilities.

The committee have a diverse range of backgrounds and interests, ranging from a drugs education specialist to a charity fundraiser, from

an ex miner, a Parish Council Clerk and an IT specialist.

We are all busy with our own careers, families and other interests but we are joined by a common enthusiasm and interest in the diverse range of wildlife we see every day on our own doorstep.

As well as regular litter picks and emptying of the dog mess bins, we also have a management plan which includes seasonal priorities as well as larger funding projects.

This helps to keep us focussed on the areas of work which have the greatest impact, and we live by one simple code of practice that underpins everything we do: The wildlife comes first.



The wildlife comes first

The timelines in the plan are structured around the breeding, nesting and hibernation times of the wildlife in the area. So much of the reed pulling happens once the year's water vole population has had their pups and are settled and happy. We deliberately create winding natural pathways through the canal in order to create safe pockets for nesting and allows wildlife to hide in plain sight.

The channels also let light in and improve the water flow, so it stays clean and refreshes regularly after rainfall. Water quality levels are monitored and reported at regular intervals throughout the year.

It is a team effort

As well as the regular work such as reed pulling, litter picks and general care of the area we also do work parties when we want to tackle a specific project such as vegetation clearance or creating designated habitats such as wetlands or marsh lands. The interest we have created in the area has been, in some ways, a double-edged sword. The more work that has been completed, the more visitors have been attracted to the area. With this in mind, we have laid pathways which are accessible and safe, installed interpretation boards, a boardwalk and strengthened existing boundaries for safer access.

Walkers and photographers always stop and chat to us, commenting that they had no idea that something so beautiful was right in front of them and that they feel so much safer now.

Our Facebook group is quickly approaching 2,000 interested people and we have members from all over the world.

We also run Facebook giveaways, competitions and prize draws and encourage people to post their

photographs. This has led to more help from the community, especially during lockdown this year when our teams had to be suspended.

Local people understood that the wildlife still needed our help and came forward. We handed out litter pickers and hoops to key individuals and family groups who volunteered to use their limited exercise time to keep the area clean, empty the dog bins and ensure the area was safe for the increased number of visitors we experienced

Working with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

Our success over the last few years can be directly attributed to the outstanding support we have received from The Derbyshire Wildlife Trust which has allowed us to access training, resources, information, guidance and advice. We feel lucky that we have a lot of input from Kate Lemon, the Regional Manager (Trent & Erewash) who we regularly turn to for advice and support and who is a great ambassador of the group, never failing to ensure that we are included in decisions and consultations with stakeholders, governing bodies and local authorities.

Humpy Bridge

Our greatest achievement to date has been the restoration of a structure, affectionately known locally as 'Humpy Bridge'.

Last year we raised over £20,000, enabling us to subcontract the works to a local stonemason, Robert Shacklock, a master craftsman. He worked tirelessly, in all weathers, to ensure that the integrity of the bridge was brought back to its former glory.



Kingfisher. Photo: Roger Breen.

He used traditional methods of construction, using hand carving tools and the same mortar mixes used over hundreds of years. Robert was soon adopted by the local community and many people came along during the project to bring him cakes and biscuits and to watch him as he worked. It became a fascinating lesson in patience, due diligence and historical practices, handed down by generations.

We also invited local school children to enter a competition to have a message to the future placed into a time capsule which was buried in a secret location during the bridge's renovation. This project had entries from four local primary schools and allowed teachers to do workshops on environmental issues and wildlife conservation.

At the grand reopening in August last year nearly 100 people turned up to 'Humpy's Coming Out Party' and we were able to recognise all of the people that had worked so hard to make the project come to fruition.

Water voles, kingfishers, white clawed crayfish and recently otters are all thriving, and it is something that we all feel enormously proud of.

Andy Moon, Founder, Chair:

"The group is constantly evolving and next year we hope to extend our educational programmes to include conservation and environmental awareness workshops courses, Thai Chi by the waterside and Introduction to Photography open days.

We are all excited about the future of the group and highly recommend getting involved in your local community as just a few like-minded people can make a huge difference to others and to the beautiful environment in which we live. Anyone interested in joining us get in touch!"



For more information you can email:
cromfordcanalgroup@outlook.com

A BIG THANK YOU to all our VOLUNTEERS!

The pandemic has had a big impact on our volunteering programme, with much of our work being suspended over lockdown.

We want to say a big thank you to all our volunteers for your patience and dedication over the last nine months.

We want to give a special mention to our trainees, Sam Spickett, Kate Blair, Viv Lisewski-Hobson and Sally Furphy, who ensured vital work continued, which frequently saw them helping out in new ways and in new areas.

Special thanks also goes to Steve Birkinshaw and Christine Flemming for their work in the Trent Valley; Nicky Loveday who has helped in the Wye Valley, Andrew Cooper and John Walls at Woodside Farm; Andy Moon and the Cromford Canal and Codnor Park Reservoir Group; Colin Wright, David Teather, Tim and Miles Jones for their work at The Avenue; Trystan Edwards and Alan Eckworth for help given to our Eco-Services team; Ron Common and James Boon for keeping work progressing at Aqueduct Cottage; Andrew Gallear, Helen Campbell, Simon Sumner, Chris Johnstone for their work on our Beaver Reintroduction project; Chris Gale for helping us process the huge response to our Beaver Appeal; Andy Welch and the Badger Vaccination team, and Kath Brown who continues to be an essential volunteer for the Derbyshire Biological Records Centre.

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust has over 600 volunteers working in all aspects of our work from hands-on conservation to surveying to badger vaccinating! We cannot name you all but please know how valued you are: we could not do this without you, thank you.



Interested?

We are currently looking for volunteer Livestock Wardens for The Avenue Country Park, Wingerworth and for a number of retail positions.

If you are interested please register here: www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteer-sign

Recruitment for other roles is still suspended but do keep a look out for new opportunities in the coming months. www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/support/volunteer



Highstreet Heroes

If you love the sound of being one of our fabulous volunteers, have you considered joining our retail team?

You never know what you might get up to, as every day in our charity shops is different! They are hubs of creativity, community, and support for not only Derbyshire's wildlife, but also the teams at the heart of them.

These teams are comprised of amazing volunteers, who get stuck in to a vast array of jobs daily. Be it serving customers on the shop floor, sorting stock behind the scenes, or even engaging with the local community to get those donations in the door.

It is truly inspiring to see what happens behind the scenes in our charity shops, all in aid of the Trust's work!



As our shops reopen we will need even more high street heroes to join our Bakewell and Belper charity shops and the fantastic teams which work in them.

We offer roles such as till assistant, sorting assistant, and back of house assistant, and are always on the hunt for social media superstars, and eBay enthusiasts!

If you think any of those roles would suit you, then apply through our website www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/available-volunteer-areas

A special thank you to our retail team, for all your hard work in keeping our shops thriving:

Angelika Daniels, Amina Burslem, Colin Ormsby-Ashworth, Dave Wilson, Eva Shepard, Graham Cranfield, Gratsi Bruno-Bradley, Jane Lamin, Janice Critchley, Karen Brooks, Louise Dalglish, Louise Jarman, Mary Bosworth, Nicky Daniels, Pat Clark, Paul Whittaker, Rachel Ormsby-Ashworth, Rosie McNestry, and Sam Bates



Winter Thrushes

Tim Birch
Director of Nature's Recovery



Fieldfare. Photo: © Shutterstock.

Welcome to our Friends from the North
As the days shorten and the nights have drawn in, it's all change in the Natural World. The swallows, warblers and cuckoos have all left us for warmer sunnier southern skies.

No sooner have our spring and summer migrants departed than winter thrushes from the Northern lands, in particular from Scandinavia, wing their way over the North Sea to spend the winter with us. They are escaping the freezing wintry conditions of Norway and Sweden and further east into Finland and Russia. Winters in the UK must seem mild to them by comparison. These birds inhabit the forests and woodlands of Northern Europe and will leave our shores again in April to return to their breeding grounds.

The two Winter Thrushes that are commonly seen in winter are the Fieldfare and the Redwing.

The name Fieldfare is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word "feldware" which meant "traveller of the fields". The Fieldfare is a large striking bird which is unlike any other Thrush you would see. It is bigger than a Song Thrush, has a blue-grey ashy head with a black mask, a black spotted and orange buff

breast and black and yellow bill. It has distinctive white underwings, which can be seen when it flies. It also has a distinctive harsh call, often uttered in flight and sounding like "yack chuck". In France its country name is Tchatcha as this also resembles its call. They are often found in nomadic flocks moving about and feeding together. They will regularly visit fields and open spaces to feed on worms and insects on the ground and are particularly fond of berries from hedges and apples and other autumnal fruits. In harsh snowy weather they will even visit your garden. They particularly like overripe apples, so if you have any do put some out in your garden on your bird table or on the lawn when the snow arrives. If you want to regularly attract these stunning birds to your garden then think about planting trees such as hawthorn, holly, juniper and yew, which all produce berries which the Fieldfares love. They roost in flocks in tall trees or large hedges. They also can intermingle with Redwings when feeding during the day.



Redwing. Photo: © Shutterstock.

The two Winter Thrushes that are commonly seen in winter are the Fieldfare and the Redwing.

The Redwing is one of the smaller thrushes we get in the UK. It gets its name from its orange rustic flank which is quite stunning. It has a lovely olive brown back and a broad white streak above the eye. Its breast is spotted, rather like a Song Thrush, and it has a silvery white underside. They also form flocks and lead a nomadic life in winter, similar to the Fieldfare. Again, in particularly bad weather these birds will visit gardens in search of food and shelter. As with Fieldfares they love all types of berries and will quickly strip hawthorn and holly bushes before moving on to find other trees they can gorge on.

If you go outside at night on a clear calm night in October or early November evenings, you can sometimes hear a distinctive "tseep tseep" call overhead in the dark. This is the sound of Redwings migrating at night and calling to each other as they fly to their wintering grounds. It has always fascinated me to hear these birds calling to each other at night above the hustle and bustle of cities like Manchester and London. When in flocks on

a holly or other berry-bearing tree, Redwings can be very noisy, chattering and whistling to each other. As spring approaches and before they return to Scandinavia in April, you can sometimes hear Redwings practicing their song. And their song is considered so beautiful that it is called the Nightingale of Norway. That is quite a compliment!

Given their love of berries it is really important that we ensure our hedges provide as much food as possible for these delightful winter visitors. Rather than scalping our hedges, giving them short back and sides in the autumn, which often happens in the countryside we need to let our hedges grow taller and wilder. Our recently acquired nature reserve at Thornhill, near Bamford in the Peak District, is a perfect example of where the hedges are growing back wilder, providing a fantastic berry larder for our wintering thrushes – hawthorn berries in particular.

So keep a close eye for these stunning birds from the North over the coming months. They really do brighten up a cold grey day in winter!

In memory of

It is with great sadness we announce the death of one of our life members and volunteers David Howson, who sadly passed away in October, and also the sad loss of Malcolm Hopton, a key volunteer in the Trent Valley for over 40 years. Our thoughts are with both their friends and families.



David Howson Left.
Malcolm Hopton Right.

For more information on Malcolm's fantastic work please visit the blog page of our website.

Because of you



We would like to show our deep appreciation to families who have sent us "Gifts In Memory" donations.



to donate

please visit:
derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/give

Thank you to everyone who has donated since June 2020.

The Trust is very lucky to receive funding from a number of grant-making trusts who are supportive of our work. We are also grateful to the many members of the public, our local groups and businesses who help us by hosting donations boxes, as well as the many activities and events that raise funds for the Trust, all of which are very valuable sources of income for us.

Working together for wildlife

50/50 Club winners

Congratulations to recent winners!

Pamela Riddle, Ms Anne Rice, Ms Susan Patrick, Peter Date, Nigel Needham, Ken Hales, Miss Jill Barton, Linda Holmes, Mrs Sylvia Hill, Wallace Gowing, Peter Date and Malcolm Neal.

Feeling lucky?

The Wild Dreams 50/50 club raises funds which will be paid to a Landfill Operator to release Landfill Communities Fund monies for Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. Please note that these funds are not eligible for Gift Aid. The funds could generate 10 times their worth.

To join at just £12 per year please fill out the form below and send a cheque (made payable to Wild Dreams) to the Trust office or complete our online form at:
[www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk / raffles-and-clubs](http://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/raffles-and-clubs)

Name (s)

Address

Telephone number Email address

Number of subscriptions at £12 each Total amount enclosed

Working in PARTNERSHIP

We work with businesses across all our living landscapes in different ways, from supporting the delivery of community projects to managing land for wildlife, with a lot going on in between! We love working with all our Corporate Partners, as we believe that together, we can enable a greener recovery for Derbyshire.



If your business would like to get involved, please get in touch with Anita Darashah-Borman, our Philanthropy Manager
adarashah@derbyshirewt.co.uk

We are proud to be working in partnership with:

Absolute Networks Ltd
Accrofab
AECOM
Aggregate Industries Ltd
Alpkit
Andrew Towlerton Associates
Ashbourne Heights Holiday Park
BASF
Blackfish Group
Bowmer Bond Narrow Fabrics Ltd
Breedon Group Ltd
Buxton & High Peak Security Services Ltd
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Commercial Estates Group Ltd
Eagle Securities
East Midlands Airport (MAG)
East Midlands Chamber (Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire)
East Midlands Railway
Environment Agency

EP Industries Ltd
EPC United Kingdom Plc
Experian
G F Tomlinson Group Ltd
Granger's International Ltd
Green Metals UK Ltd
Henry Boot Plc
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Tarmac
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The Loaf
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Toyota Motor Manufacturing (UK) Ltd
University of Derby
Vine House Farm
Virgin Media – Sheffield
Visit Peak District and Derbyshire
Ward Recycling
Weleda UK
White Peak Distillery
Wienerberger Ltd
Zycomm Ltd





Grass snake Photo: © Danny Green 2020/Division.

Planning for the Future

The Wildlife Trusts call for a new 'wildbelt' designation to help nature's recovery

New analysis of the Government's White Paper, Planning for the Future, has revealed that the proposed reforms will increase the threat to nature across England and do little to improve Derbyshire for wildlife and people. Our environment is in peril and wildlife is disappearing at an alarming rate.

The Wildlife Trusts' key concerns with the proposals are:

- Failure to address together the climate, ecological and health emergencies
- New zones will not reverse nature's decline nor integrate it into people's lives
- Inadequate nature data means that planners will make poor decisions about zones
- The bias will be towards permitting new developments
- Simplifying Environmental Impact Assessments will weaken environmental protections
- Undermining the democratic process by reducing people's opportunity to influence the planning process

The Wildlife Trusts' five principles are

1. Wildlife recovery and people's easy access to nature must be put at the heart of planning reform by mapping a Nature Recovery Network
2. Nature protection policies and standards must not be weakened, and assessment of environmental impact must take place before development is permitted
3. Address the ecological and climate crises by protecting new land put into recovery by creating a new designation – Wildbelt
4. People and local stakeholders must be able to engage with the planning system
5. Decisions must be based on up-to-date and accurate nature data

The Wildlife Trusts are therefore calling on Government to commit to five principles or reforms for future planning. One of these principles would, for the first time, protect new land put into nature's recovery with a designation called Wildbelt.

A flourishing green environment is vital for our health and wellbeing. We must keep and strengthen the environmental protections we have – especially for designated Local Wildlife Sites which are often impacted by development. We want our National Parks to do more for wildlife and the planning system must map out and contribute to a nature recovery network across every area whether it's allocated for growth, renewal or protection.



Common carder bee on a southern marsh orchid at Wollen Meadow. ©Nick Upton 2020/Division.

"We will continue to work with local government, businesses and local communities to help planning and development take wildlife into account."

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust will continue to work with local government, businesses and local communities to help planning and development take wildlife into account. We responded to over 1000 planning applications and major infrastructure projects including HS2 last year. We assess impacts and make recommendations and in some cases recommend the refusal or deferral of applications.

Examples include

- Our advice to the Local Planning Authority on a housing development in north east Derbyshire ensured no further loss but improvements for local wildlife. It resulted in permission for 14 homes on a portion of the site where botanical interest was limited. The remaining area was left alone for wildlife, with good links to surrounding habitats, which benefitted grass snakes, small mammals, butterflies and other insects.
- Avant Homes awarded £15,000 to improve Wollen Meadow Local Wildlife Site as mitigation and compensation for a development in Creswell. The funding will help create new habitats and restore wetlands for insects, birds and plants.
- During construction of the Peacehaven development at Willington, a pond, wildflower grassland, trees and hedge planting were created on agricultural land which had been of limited wildlife value.
- A storage area for flood water was created in the first phase of the Infinity Park development at Sinfin Derby. It has now one of the best bird sites in the area, known as Sinfin Moor Wetland.
- Thirty owl boxes in four years have been installed on new development and restored barns across Derbyshire following our advice.



Barn owl. Photo: © Russell Savoy.

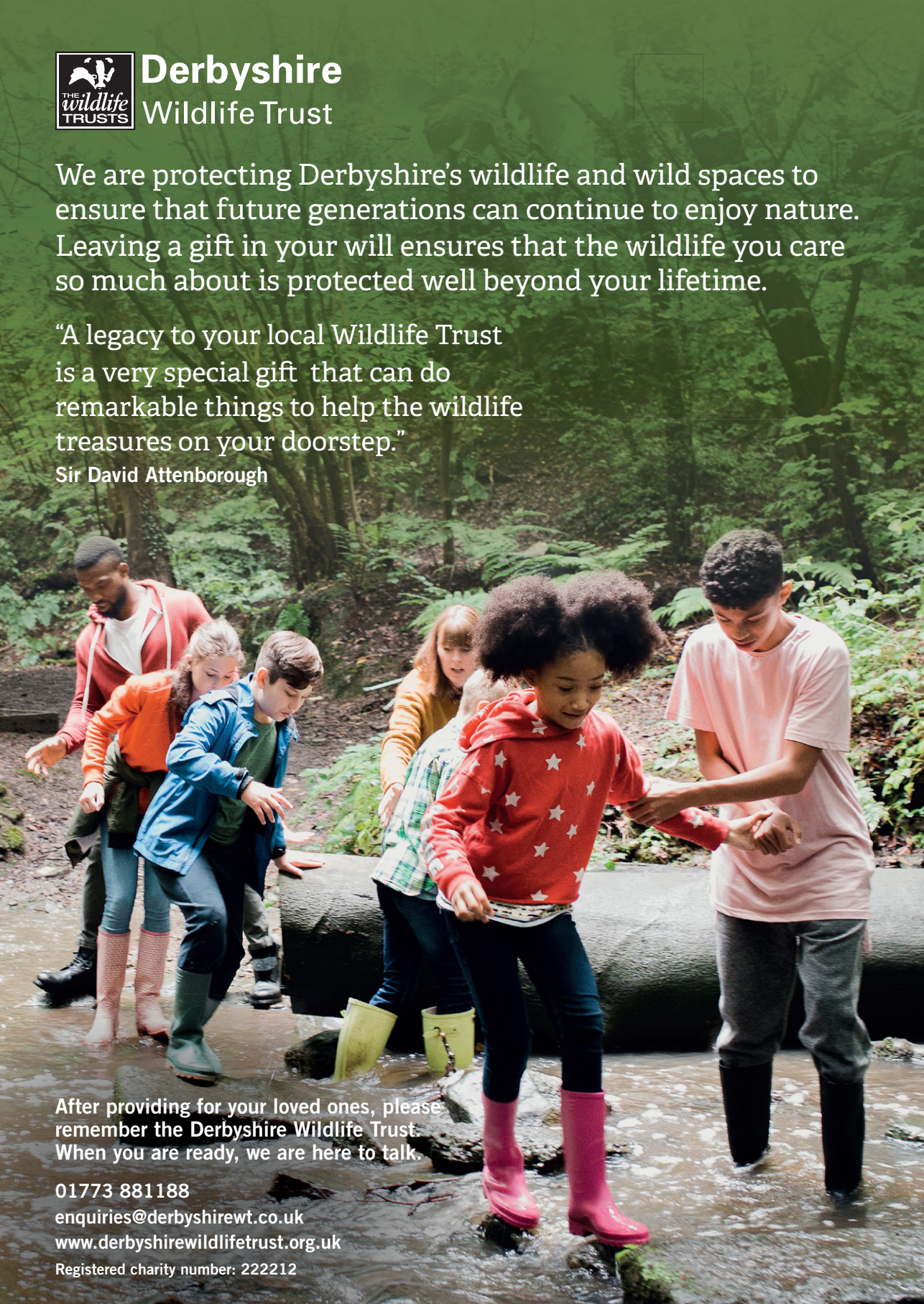


Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

We are protecting Derbyshire's wildlife and wild spaces to ensure that future generations can continue to enjoy nature. Leaving a gift in your will ensures that the wildlife you care so much about is protected well beyond your lifetime.

"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

Registered charity number: 222212