# DERBYSHIRE



**SPRING/SUMMER 2024** 

www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk



**Jo Smith** Chief Executive Officer



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 Water vole © Terry Whittaker 2020VISION

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### Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

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# **WELCOME**

Nature has a profound impact on our lives in so many ways. Whether it's concern over flooding, extinction of species, a longing for clean rivers or the importance of nature to your livelihood or recreational activities, it touches all of us personally.

We stand at a crucial juncture in time with a general election happening this year, which could be the most pivotal one yet. The chosen government will either mark a turning point for nature and climate or set the stage for disastrous consequences.

We are making some fantastic steps forward. With your support we are restoring, rewilding and reconnecting landscapes across Derbyshire. Together, we are also providing new opportunities for communities to connect with wildlife to benefit their happiness and wellbeing. But we want to do so much more and we need the government to prioritise nature as much as we do!

This issue of Wilder Derbyshire covers our priorities for the upcoming government, what it implies for us in Derbyshire, and how you can participate and voice your concerns.

It is so clear that people care more about the state of their natural environment than ever before. With a general election on the horizon, it's time politicians heard that message.

We appreciate your continued support, and together we can make a difference.

Jo Smith

Chief Executive Officer

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# **DERBYSHIRE NEWS**

# **GOOD NEWS**

# SPOTTED .

# **Fi** $\times$ $\odot$ Share your images with us

www.derby shire wild life trust.org.uk/wild life/record-sighting



# Tree Creeper – The Avenue Washlands Nature Reserve Photo: November 2023 © Sean Barnett Photography



Sulphur Tuft – Allestree



Photo: November 2023 © noah.in.focus



Water Vole – Cromford Canal Photo: January 2024 © Lorna Dickinson

# **Thank you!** Nature to be commonplace at Common Farm



Donations and support from across Derbyshire and beyond have secured the purchase of 80 acres of land for nature and people to enjoy for generations to come. We have completed of the purchase of Common Farm, at Nether Heage near Belper. The site will be rewilded to create a mosaic of habitats, at what is a critical time for nature.

Over 2,000 people donated to the public appeal, launched last October, contributing almost  $\pounds$ 300,000 towards the purchase.

The local community have been crucial to the success of this appeal, with people organising walking tours for potential donors, delivering leaflets and encouraging others to get involved. Hundreds of local residents also donated themselves.

The Trust is now excited to start working closely with the community to develop the site as a great place for people and nature.

We have been overwhelmed by the support from all over including some incredibly passionate local groups who have shown what people can do for nature when they come together. Each and every person who has donated or shared our messages has helped to secure this land for people and for nature.

Making more space for nature at Common Farm will give wildlife the chance to recover here, and once regenerated it will store more carbon, help store more water to reduce local flooding and help trap nutrients that leach into our river systems. The purchase is also great news for local residents and visitors who will be able to continue to enjoy the area, and to see it become richer for nature in the years to come!

o come!

Spring/Summer 2024 Wilder Derbyshire

THE LATEST NEWS

# ATEST NEWS SUPPORTING WILDLIFE

# **Nature to gain from development** as major planning law rings in

In order to gain planning permission, developers are now required to deliver a minimum of 10% net gain in biodiversity with newly created or enhanced habitats secured, for at least 30 years, on all new sites.

As the protector of wildlife across the county, we have been preparing for this landmark legislation for the past few years and believe the new Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) laws will be powerful in bringing developers. local authorities and land owners together to provide the best outcomes for nature's recovery.

Whilst some development schemes will be able to achieve the required biodiversity enhancements on their own sites, some will need to be delivered at off-site locations, creating a marketplace for BNG units.

Our in-house ecological consultancy and ecosystem service provider, Wild Solutions, is the only BNG provider that is focused on making more space for nature rather than maximising the number of BNG units per hectare. Through a process called habitat banking, we are taking a nature-led approach to BNG by creating high-quality and resilient habitats. delivered in the best place for nature, before the loss occurs. The

sites will be managed in perpetuity for nature, under our stewardship, and all the profits generated will be reinvested to have a greater impact for wildlife.

In November 2023, we secured the purchase of 60 acres of land to be rewilded. 5km north of Chesterfield City Centre. The site, known as Wild Whittington, recently became the first habitat bank in Derbyshire to be secured with a section 106 agreement with the local planning authority (LPA), Chesterfield Borough Council. It will allow developers and planning authorities to source off-site Biodiversity Net Gain units to support development schemes and local nature.

BNG becoming mandatory is great news for nature and offers a significant opportunity for Derbyshire Wildlife Trust to leverage its expertise to support this new approach, while remaining true to its charitable status and strategic goals. This legislation has brought much needed focus to naturebased solutions and how they can help meet environmental and climate emergencies.

For more information, visit www.wildsolutionsdwt.co.uk

# **Rewilding of Allestree Park** awarded £1.1 million

Exciting plans have been announced for how the community would like to shape Allestree Park into a richer place for people and nature, and help tackle the effects of climate change over the next 12 months, and beyond.

In order to achieve the community's vision, we have been successful in securing almost £1.1 million in funding over three years from the National Lottery Climate Action Fund. which aims to help communities across the UK to address climate change.

The Community Rewilding of Allestree Park is the largest urban rewilding project in the UK. It aims to support the delivery of an even more beautiful and accessible place for people of Derby and surrounding areas to visit, where wildlife will flourish even more and species will return.

Throughout the life of the project, together with our partners, we have been having conversations with a wealth of people. It is clear that community rewilding means different things to different people, but there are several things that most people want to see. These common goals will form the focus for the project activity this year, including a jam-packed calendar of initiatives and events.

Among the ideas fed back, people have said that they want to see the light touch interventions continue to improve the site for nature, such as improving the diversity of wildflowers and letting grasslands grow. They also want more community involvement



projects, including monitoring changes and volunteering to reintroduce mini-but-mighty species, such as dung beetles.

### Lisa Witham, Director of Wilder Communities

said: "The fund will allow us to provide natural outdoor engagement spaces, deliver Nature Tots activities on site to encourage pre-school children to connect with nature, set up Junior Rangers sessions for young people who are interested in conservation. and work with local schools to improve their own outdoor spaces.

"It will also go towards implementing some of the other ideas people have suggested, such as improving multi-user access and inclusion on site with accessible benches, improved interpretation and signage, and the delivery of self-led and organised outdoor activities for people to take part in, which we know from research will benefit their mental and physical wellbeing through a connectedness to nature."

### Dr Jo Smith CEO of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

**added**: "We want to say a huge thank you to everyone who has contributed – your feedback has been invaluable and helped shape the future of Allestree Park to make it even better for people and nature."

For more information, visit www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/rewildingallestree-park.

# OUR PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT UK GOVERNMENT

The Wildlife Trusts and partners are calling nationally for these priorities to ensure all parties stand on a platform with nature's recovery at its heart.

PRIORITY NUMBER ONE • Bring back the UK's lost wildlife

• Immense pressure from decades of pollution and habitat loss has driven wildlife into catastrophic decline

MILLAGO HILLARD AND CONTRACT

The UK is home to species found nowhere else on Earth. But immense pressure from decades of pollution and habitat loss has driven wildlife into catastrophic decline. Shockingly, 1 in 6 species in the UK is now at risk of extinction.

Nature is declining at a speed never previously seen and shows no sign of slowing. It is no longer enough to just protect the wildlife that remains – we need the next UK government to align across departments to put nature into recovery, on land and at sea, by the end of the next Parliament.

To bring back our lost wildlife and put it on a path to recovery, we're calling on all political parties to... **Make more space for nature**. To reverse the declines of wildlife the next UK government should launch an Olympic-style cross-government delivery project to protect and restore at least 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030.

**Stop damage to Marine Protected Areas**. Our Marine Protected Areas should be properly protected – with destructive practices banned and development avoided.

**Bring wild beavers back**. Returning beavers to the wild can be a game changer for restoring lost wetlands and benefitting all kinds of wildlife. Moreover, beavers can help to reduce the risk of wildfires and flooding which threaten people's homes. Bringing back wild beavers to England is a critical part of addressing the climate and nature crises.



# PRIORITY NUMBER TWO

End river pollution and water scarcity.
The UK is ranked as one of the worst countries in Europe for water quality, with pollution beyond legal limits caused by a toxic cocktail of sewage and agricultural pollution

The state of our rivers is a national disgrace. The UK is ranked as one of the worst countries in Europe for water quality, with pollution beyond legal limits caused by a toxic cocktail of sewage and agricultural pollution. Currently, 40% of waters fail quality targets due to pollution from agriculture and land management, and in 2022 alone, raw sewage was discharged into waterways over 300,000 times.

To end river pollution and unsustainable water use, we're calling on all political parties to...

**Enforce the law.** Environmental watchdogs must be empowered and sufficiently resourced to ensure they can monitor and inspect polluters and enforce penalties upon those who break the law.

**Halve nutrient pollution** by 2030. Sewage, wastewater and agriculture are all suffocating our rivers and the wildlife that depends on them.



**Deliver stronger protection for chalk streams**. Over 85% of the world's chalk streams are found in the UK. These unique rivers are some of the planet's rarest habitats. Strengthened legal protections are required to protect and reverse damage to these crucial habitats.

# PRIORITY NUMBER THREE

• Fund wildlife-friendly farming

By supporting farmers to shift towards regenerative, nature-friendly methods, farming has huge potential to deliver a green rural renewal. Farming is too often unsustainable, but with management of over 70% of UK land, farmers should be a significant part of the solution.

Many farmers and land managers have gone to great lengths to support wildlife without being adequately rewarded.

To support a just transition for farmers, we're calling on all political parties to...

**Increase the budget** for wildlife-friendly farming. To reverse the decline of nature by 2030, and secure the UK's long term food security, the budget to support wildlifefriendly farming should be increased.

**Halve pesticide use**. To save the future of insects – and all life that depends on them – the next UK government must halve pesticide use by 2030 and maintain all bans on of bee-killing and human-healthharming neonicotinoids once and for all. Help farmers reduce emissions and adapt to climate change. Adaptation and mitigation need to be embedded in farm payment schemes; farmers need better information about how farming with nature can increase their resilience; and a land use strategy is needed that considers how food production needs to change in the UK in response to climate change.

"What we want to see is action, not rhetoric; not empty promises but a government that acts. Positive, long-term action to help our biodiversity recover."

**Iolo Williams** Wildlife TV Presenter and Vice President, The Wildlife Trusts



• Enable healthy communities

• Tackle the climate emergency



Communities in the most deprived areas of the UK are ten times LESS likely to live in the greenest areas. More than one third of the population are unable to access green places near their home. The current situation is unfair – but it does not have to be like this.

Improving access to natural, wildlife-rich places where we live, learn and work will transform people's lives, improving health, happiness, and hope across communities.

To bring about healthy and sustainable communities, we're calling on all political parties to...

**Commit to a cross-government fund** to grow community-based health services. 'Social prescribing' must be integrated into health

# PRIORITY NUMBER FIVE

We are in a climate and nature emergency, and the two are inextricably linked. Climate change is driving nature's decline, and the loss of wildlife and wild places leaves us ill-equipped to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to these changes. One crisis cannot be solved without the other.

To tackle the climate emergency, we're calling on all political parties to...

Help nature and people adapt to climate change. The next UK government must measure progress on adaptation at the same time as progress on reducing carbon emissions. Adapting to climate change must be integrated across all UK government policies. and social care services in the community. It makes economic sense and has the potential to deliver improved health and well-being at scale.

### A right to a healthy natural environment.

Local authorities should be empowered to work alongside communities, to address inequalities in access to natural spaces in their local areas.

**Give every child the best start in life**. New statutory guidance to deliver learning outdoors for all can ensure our schools support happier, more confident children who understand their impact on our natural world.



**Protect our Blue Carbon**. The marine environment has a huge role to play in locking up and storing carbon. It is essential that these important stores of Blue Carbon are recognised, monitored, and protected from damaging development and activities.

### Upgrade energy efficiency for homes. To

reduce emissions, costs, and energy bills, the next UK government must help homes upgrade their energy efficiency urgently, by rapidly expanding home retrofit schemes to bring the entire UK housing stock to a good level of efficiency by 2030.

For more information see: https://www. wildlifetrusts.org/general-election-2024-ourpriorities

# BRING BAGK THE UK'S LOST WILDLIFE

# What does this mean in Derbyshire?

The 2023 State of Nature Report<sup>1</sup> highlighted the concerning continued decline in terrestrial and freshwater species in the UK. There has been a 19% decrease in species abundance since records began in the 1970s and 16%, equating to 1,500 species, are now at threat of extinction. Nature was already in decline before the 1970s due to centuries of persecution, increased pollution and continued habitat loss.<sup>2</sup> This therefore only represents a proportion of the decline for which we have records. However, the report also provides hope that with targeted conservation, some species are starting to recover. Though challenging and complex this shows that the work we are doing at DWT to support species recovery has never been more important.

We asked those leading some of our exciting species recovery projects to provide an overview of our important work and the complexities faced as we strive towards species recovery here in Derbyshire.

# Atlantic Salmon Jennifer Kril – Living Rivers Officer

Atlantic salmon, once found spawning in the headwaters of some of our most well-known rivers in the county, are now classified as 'endangered' in Great Britain.<sup>3</sup>

To successfully spawn, salmon need cold, clean water of varying depths with plenty of clean gravel. Due to climate change, pollution and man-made barriers like dams and weirs, suitable habitat has been lost or become inaccessible.

Bypassing or removing man-made barriers has proven an effective approach to promoting salmon recovery when delivered alongside habitat improvements. For this to be successful, partnership working is key to ensure the necessary skills and expertise. Work on this scale is costly and consideration needs to be given to local heritage, planning permissions, flood modelling and monitoring. Projects can therefore take a long time to establish and complete.

DWT continue to be a driving force towards the recovery of salmon alongside many partners. Major works started in 2013, with the building of fish passages along the Derwent, and a weir removal in Duffield in 2022. In 2023, part of the River Ecclesbourne was re-meandered into its original course, reconnecting the river to its floodplain and bypassing a disused weir. These projects have provided access to 28km of river for migrating fish species in Derbyshire after hundreds of years.



# **Beavers** Emma Datta – Beaver Feasibility Officer

Beavers had been hunted to extinction in Britain by the turn of the 16th century. Losing this species led to loss of the mosaic of wetlands they so brilliantly create, which play an important role in contributing to a biodiverse environment.

These wetlands also have many wider benefits for society, such as reducing flooding downstream by storing water and releasing water during times of drought, keeping rivers flowing, thereby offering a natural means to support our adaptation to climate change.

Wild beavers have returned to Britain, with sanctioned wild populations across Scotland and in Devon, England. Scotland have now introduced a national beaver restoration strategy, with England and Wales governments continuing discussion.

The reintroduction of species is supported by national (DEFRA) and international (IUCN) guidelines which necessitate species requirements and environmental and social considerations being accounted for prior to a reintroduction.

Here at Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, we are taking the first steps towards this assessment. To achieve this, alongside assessing habitat, we will be working together with Derbyshire communities – to listen and understand concerns, to work together to find solutions that address concerns and maximise benefits, to work collaboratively towards the development of a long-term robust strategy.

# Water voles Dave Savage – Landscape Recovery Manager

We have lost over 90% of water voles in the last 50 years due mainly to the spread of the American mink. These tough nonnative predators that escaped into our countryside eat most living things near water, including voles, birds and fish. This creates a difficult dilemma. Without their removal native wildlife will continue to be pushed to extinction.

A game-changing piece of technology has been developed to help remove mink. With our neighbours in Staffordshire, we have a catchment-wide approach on the Dove, using a device that sends a text message when a trap has been activated. Previously every trap had to be checked twice daily, which was resource heavy. Now we can see every trap on a computer screen and only respond to those that have been triggered. The project will be run for 4 years with hundreds of traps in action. The traps will remain out with stakeholders after the end of the project.

In East Anglia, mink has been almost completely eradicated using this technology, and subsequently water vole and wetland bird species have returned in great numbers.

### 1 State of Nature Report (2023) https://stateofnature.org.uk/

- 2 State of Nature Report (2019) https:// stateofnature.org.uk/previous-reports/
- 3 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species https://www.iucnredlist.org/



# **END RIVER POLLUTION END RIVER POLLUTION END RIVER POLLUTION**

# - Derbyshire Rights For Rivers

# Scott Blance – Advocacy Manager

Look down on the Derwent Valley from Curbar Edge, skip across the stepping stones of Dove Dale, or walk by the banks of the Trent and you can see how our relationship with place is influenced by rivers. They provide perspective and act as a visual reminder of our interconnectivity.

The healing power of rivers should not be underestimated. Spending time in nature can have transformative effects in lowering levels of stress and anxiety, and the Wye Valley is a great example. Visiting Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's reserve at Millers Dale is an immersive experience as you walk along the banks of clear, fast-flowing waters and under overhanging cliffs bursting with verdant greenery. In a world of constant screen time and needless distractions, the interplay of hydrology and geology engages all the senses and holds the attention of young and old alike. When treated with respect, our rivers provide a myriad of benefits that should be accessible to everyone. Unfortunately, under the water all is not well, with problems including pollution, over-abstraction, modification, the spread of invasive species, and government underfunding.

Understanding how these problems all interact is a challenge, made worse when we don't understand or acknowledge their scale. The government officially classes all sections of the Derbyshire Derwent as being in either 'good' or 'moderate' condition. In reality, that's a partial representation of the data. In terms of the volume and duration of sewage incidences, the Derwent was the fifth most polluted river in England and Wales in 2021.



How can we fix a problem when we don't recognise it as one, and why are we reluctant to do so? For centuries, we've treated nature as an ever-present resource to be controlled and exploited. This philosophy turbocharged England's industrialisation and global expansionism, which we exported as the model of development. The historical significance of the Derwent Valley Mills UNESCO site should be preserved as a reminder of how progress is contextual, and that while such advances should be celebrated for their vision, our understanding of the world is always developing. Our exploitative approach underpinned improvements in living conditions for many, but we know now that it's driving our planet to the brink of environmental collapse.

Giving nature a stronger voice might be a step in the right direction. Granting legal rights to nature shifts our dynamic from dominance and extraction towards mutual respect. It's a useful lens to help us to recognise the inherent value of nature, but it could also create better protections for wildlife.

Rivers are a prime example of a natural system which is essential to all life and delivers a lot of additional benefits for society, but which we continue to mistreat in numerous ways. Existing protections aren't deterring ongoing abuse of our river systems, so a new approach is needed to governance. The Universal Declaration of River Rights is an increasingly popular template, which recommends that all rivers possess the following rights:  (1) the right to flow;
 (2) the right to perform essential functions within the river's ecosystem;
 (3) the right to be free from pollution;
 (4) the right to feed and be fed by sustainable aquifers;
 (5) the right to native biodiversity; and
 (6) the right to regeneration and restoration.

This discussion helps all of us rethink our role in river restoration regardless of scale, from individuals and community groups to local authorities and beyond. Local authorities in Derbyshire are looking into the rights of nature and hopefully future collaborations with community groups will see the creation of new legal charters for rivers like the Derwent. Budgets have been slashed over recent years but councils remain hugely important and we'd like to see them assess all the ways that they impact on rivers. For example, this could include changes to long-term planning policy that address issues around drainage and pollution. Conversations with councillors at Derbyshire Dales District Council have been particularly open-minded, and we are hopeful that with your support, it becomes one of the first councils in England to fully explore this approach.

Granting rights to rivers will create a new framework to consider our relationship with nature for the benefit of people and wildlife, complement ongoing restoration projects that Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and our partners are doing on the ground, and help tip the scales back in nature's favour. It's a first step to creating a recognised voice for the river that can defend its rights locally, and to a more sustainable way of life.

# Wildlife Friendly

# Hollie Fisher – Nature Recovery Advice Manager

Farming and agriculture is an integral part of the UK's landscape and cultural history; covering an estimated 71% of land, the farming community have substantial influence over the way our land is managed. These figures make it clear that conservation initiatives must be inclusive of different forms of farming if we hope to have a real opportunity at halting, and possibly reversing, the climate and biodiversity crisis we are currently facing. This means moving away

from business as usual and taking a dynamic approach to balance nature's recovery, cultural heritage and economic viability. A multitude of compounding factors in recent years have led to growing pressure on self-sufficiency within our own resources, increasing demand for UK-grown crops and meat, subsequently creating a narrative where people are concerned over the potential knock-on impacts managing land for nature will have on agricultural productivity. Recent studies have shown that 20% of agricultural land in the UK only accounts for 3% of total calorie production, indicating that, if done appropriately, there

is real scope for change without reducing

To achieve a landscape where nature friendly farming is the norm, it is important that there are opportunities for changes at all levels of agriculture, from conservation grazing for meat production, right through to large-scale intensive arable farms. The primary deciding factor behind all forms of environmentally sensitive agriculture is financial viability; thankfully the UK has seen an increasing awareness of the need for payments for ecosystem services, leading to an increase in the number of Green Finance initiatives making these things possible.

Areas of high productivity often result in large, intensive expanses of arable crop, and whilst these landscapes are important for food production, they often form major barriers for species dispersal. Here, nature can be integrated into the site through creating linear features, connecting corridors and creating small pockets of habitat, networking through the farm. The Jordans Farm Partnership is an amazing example of how arable farming can both help nature, and be profitable for the landowner. With 34 farmers involved, each committing to manage a minimum of 10% of the farm for nature. these farmers have created numerous wildlife

friendly habitats, utilising different financial initiatives, such as Countryside Stewardship, to create profitable business models.

Many farmers are taking this one step further, with increased movement towards regenerative agriculture, which is a concept of creating a farm that works with nature to increase sustainability and profitability, and reduce carbon emissions. It focuses on building from the ground up, restoring the health of the soil and rebuilding organic matter to form a healthy base on which to build. This is integrated with a range of additional principles such as cover crops and crop rotation, agroforestry and rotational grazing. All of this leads to the farm becoming less reliant on artificial inputs, such as fertilisers, reduces production costs and in turn has been proven to be profitable.

Managing farmland in a way that is both profitable, and ecologically sound is becoming increasingly achievable, following a rise in Green Finance initiatives, which has opened up opportunities to create blended financial models for farm businesses. This could be achieved through using the newly revised Countryside Stewardship payments or Sustainable Farming Initiative to fund the creation, and now maintenance, of habitats, such as arable nesting plots for lapwings and uncut field verges or scrub creation, mixed with utilising woodland creation schemes and carbon credit payments, such as MOREwoods or the Woodland Carbon Code to





create parcels of woodlands and hedgerows. Through the various funding streams and opportunities, reducing the need for intense production, it is becoming easier for land managers to use stock as active tools for habitat management, following conservation grazing regimes and subsequently selling the stock at premium prices, a business model that the Knepp Estate have successfully utilised to establish and maintain substantial profits.

There is no doubt that agricultural habitats are extremely important within our landscape, not only culturally and economically, but ecologically. Farmlands have numerous specialist species associated with them, over half of which are now known to be declining. By intertwining green finance initiatives and grant payments into a farm's business model, we can move towards a future where the sounds of skylarks, linnets and yellowhammers are no longer a rarity, and species can disperse through the countryside with ease.



productivity.

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# realing

# Danielle Brown – Head of Community Action

### Learning through nature

Scientific studies have shown that connecting to nature improves our mental and physical wellbeing. Work by the University of Derby has shown that our connection to nature dips significantly during the teenage years.

### **OUR LEARNING THROUGH NATURE**

**PROJECT** is addressing this through enabling key community figures to connect children and young people to nature through the following schemes:

**WILD SCHOOLS** – providing school staff with training to feel confident in using their outdoor spaces in their everyday teaching. Learning to teach the curriculum outdoors, leading forest school, caring for their school grounds and using nature to enhance children's wellbeing.

**NATURE TOTS** – helping community groups and nurseries to embed our nature-based

play into their activities and providing support to those who would like to set up their own group in the community.

JUNIOR RANGERS – supporting enthusiastic individuals and groups to gain the skills and knowledge to set up their own Junior Ranger group. Helping 11-18-year-olds gain experience of practical conservation skills and giving back to their community.

To find out more about the training and support we can offer, visit www.derbyshirewildlifetrust. org.uk/wilderlearning or contact trainingenquiries @derbyshirewt.co.uk.

# New qualification to enable more people to experience nature and boost wellbeing.

We recognise the importance of healthy and resilient communities, and to help achieve this we want to support more people to connect with nature to improve their health and wellbeing. Connection to nature can be achieved in many ways, including exploring nature with our senses, noticing its beauty, or considering what nature means to us. To enable more people to connect with nature we are launching a brand new qualification: 'Nature Connection for Wellbeing'. This level one AIM award is designed for health, voluntary, community, social enterprise and faith groups, businesses, as CPD, or for anyone that would like to gain the skills, knowledge and confidence to be able to run nature connection sessions. The qualification includes the 5 pathways to nature connection, the 5 ways to wellbeing, along with practical ideas for safely connecting people to nature both



indoors and outdoors. Those who embark on the training will feel assured and empowered to deliver their own sessions, boosting the wellbeing of all their participants and improving the overall health in their community.

# 'Be a Jay Day'

During September, we launched our brand new Team Wilder action, 'Be a Jay Day'. This action aims to mimic the natural processes of a Jay.

Throughout Derbyshire, thousands of you have been inspired by jays, a clever woodland bird that stashes thousands of acorns each winter.

You've been out collecting acorns and planting them in your gardens, local places and community orchards, leaving a legacy for the future of abundant, majestic oak trees.

We've had planting events across the county, from Old Whittington in Chesterfield, down to Shipley Country Park, to inspire communities to take on Be a Jay and make a real difference to our landscapes for years to come.

We have lots of other Team Wilder actions you can take part in if you're feeling inspired.

For more Team Wilder Actions see: www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/teamwilder

Spring/Summer 2024 Wilder Derbyshire

# Nature's Climate HEROES

# **Rachel Bennett – Head of Wilder Landscapes**

We all know that we are in a climate emergency. There's no denying it, the evidence is irrefutable. Climate breakdown and the alarming decline of wildlife are the biggest threats to our ongoing survival as a species. Climate change is driving nature's decline, and the loss of wildlife and wild places leaves us ill-equipped to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to these changes. One crisis cannot be solved without the other.

A historic and ongoing disregard for nature has got us into this mess. But at this critical juncture, nearly halfway through the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, nature itself is the world's most valuable asset in the fight against climate change.

### WHAT ARE NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS?

Nature-based solutions include a wide variety of approaches to restore ecosystems and natural processes to address both environmental and societal challenges.

Nature-based solutions address these challenges through the protection, sustainable management and restoration of ecosystems, benefitting both biodiversity and human well-being.

Woodlands, wetlands, peatlands and grasslands, are among the key ecosystems that play a pivotal role in mitigating climate change. Trees, for instance, act as carbon sinks, absorbing CO2 from the atmosphere and storing it in their biomass. Additionally, wetlands serve as natural carbon storage systems, while also providing flood protection and water purification. Enhancing and restoring these ecosystems not only mitigates climate change but also enhances biodiversity and other ecosystem services.

These solutions can also enhance resilience to climate change impacts. Restored natural habitats can buffer communities against extreme weather events by providing natural flood management, reducing erosion, and regulating water flow. By integrating nature into urban landscapes, through high-nature green spaces and natural infrastructure, cities can mitigate heat island effects and improve air quality. So who are nature's climate heroes?

### Woodlands

Trees are the ultimate carbon capture and storage machines. Like great carbon sinks, woods and forests absorb atmospheric carbon and lock it up for centuries. They do this through photosynthesis. The entire woodland ecosystem plays a huge role in locking up carbon, including the living wood, roots, leaves, deadwood, surrounding soils and its associated vegetation.

213 million tonnes of carbon is locked up in the living trees of UK woodlands

A young wood with mixed native species can lock up 400+ tonnes carbon per hectare in the trees, roots and soil.



### Wetlands

Wetlands are extremely important natural carbon stores, as they sequester substantial amounts of soil carbon over the long term because of slow decomposition and high primary productivity.

Wetlands act as sponges that protect against floods and ameliorate droughts by storing water and releasing it to maintain river flows long after the rains cease.

### **Beavers**

Beavers are a keystone species, which means they exert an important effect on the larger ecosystem. They engineer abundant river systems, the likes of which we haven't seen in the UK for centuries. Studies show that active beaver wetlands can support up to a third more species, compared to wetlands without beavers. Established dams, complex living structures themselves, function as in-situ water filters, removing some pollution before the river reaches the sea. Dams slow the peak flow rate, absorbing and lessening the impacts of high water during flood events.





# WHAT ARE WE DOING TO TACKLE THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY?

All of our Landscape Recovery programmes at Derbyshire Wildlife Trust aim to restore ecosystems at a landscape scale, emphasizing the pivotal role of nature-based solutions and rewilding.

For example, the Derwent Living Forest programme aims to create a connected wooded landscape across 30,000ha of the Derbyshire Derwent Catchment by 2050. We are working with communities and landowners on the creation and restoration of natural habitats, making space for nature to take the lead and allowing the development of vital habitats, such as woodland. This, alongside the natural establishment of a rich mosaic of ecotones, offers highly valuable habitat for a huge diversity of species and increases the resilience of ecosystems towards the climate and ecological emergencies. Where this work is implemented and adopted, data is being collected to further inform the scientific community's understanding of the ecosystem services provided by these habitat types, including impacts on carbon sequestration comparative to areas under more traditional management.

Spring/Summer 2024 Wilder Derbyshire

# The begin of the b

How to get your local priorities for nature heard at the General Election

# **Ben Carter – Director of Development**

Nobody knows better what nature needs in your area than you and the people around you. Now is the time to come together with your neighbours to decide what needs to be done, and to make sure your local candidates listen and commit to action.

Nature is important to all of us, and in so many different ways. Maybe you are worried about flooding or the loss of species. Perhaps you want clean rivers to swim in, or to fish from. Nature could be vital to you as a farmer, or because you draw your living from the land. Maybe you like to walk, run, climb or ride in a landscape that is thriving. Or is there a specific place, important to you, that needs restoration or protection?



Whatever your connection to nature, or your worries and concerns, the Neighbourhood Nature Plan is your chance to have your say, and to join your voice with thousands of others across Derbyshire.

To ensure there is a strong and diverse voice for nature during the 2024 general election, this new initiative has been launched to support local people in deciding their own nature priorities and holding elected MPs to account for their delivery.

We know that the nature and climate crisis is a high priority for voters, with the majority of people supporting

government action for nature now. But different issues will hold different weight with different communities making it vital that the voice for nature is both loud and diverse, and that it represents the many different ways that people value and rely on the natural world.

That's why we have partnered with the British Mountaineering Council, Down to Earth, Rural Action Derbyshire, CPRE and the Woodland Trust to start the Neighbourhood Nature Plan. Our aim is to help people hold their own Neighbourhood Nature Forums where they can decide on local priorities and effectively campaign for these ahead of the general election. Neighbourhood Nature Forums can be at any scale, from a citizen's assembly in a local hall, to a talk amongst friends round a kitchen table.

Using direct support from us and a toolkit we have designed specifically for this initiative, the partnership hopes to enable local people and groups to bring people together, publish their priorities, and advocate for pledges from candidates.

> The toolkit includes advice and checklists to help run meetings effectively, from setting agendas and talking points, to note taking and creating action plans. There's also lots of ideas on how to promote meetings with tips on event booking sites, downloadable posters and social media content.

Now is a critical time for wildlife and natural ecosystems, meaning that the next general election is one of the most important of our times. The next government must turn the tide on the nature and climate crisis. If they fail then the natural world, including all of us, will suffer.

The partnership hopes that through this initiative all prospective MPs in Derbyshire will be made aware of and support the nature priorities of their constituents, and for those MPs elected to meet a least one Neighbourhood Nature Forum within a year of their election to discuss delivery.

### You can setup your own Neighbourhood Nature Forum or find and join your local group by visiting www.neighbourhoodnatureplan.org.

# THE NIGHT OF Wildlife

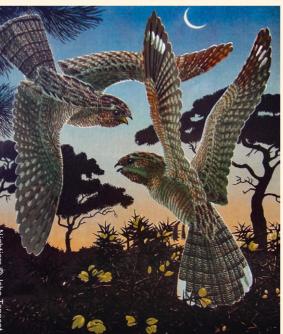
# Nick Brown – Wildlife Enquiries Officer

As longer and warmer days approach, there's a welcome surge in wildlife activity, yet much of it will remain more or less hidden from us.

While my personal preference is to get outdoors really early (to catch the bird if not the worm) many forms of wildlife only become active as the light fades and night begins to fall.

Towards dusk, woodcock will display over the woods where they nest, and nightjars, a species which is increasing in the county, will wind up their eerie churring songs in the new 'clear fell' areas where dark lifeless conifer plantations have recently been removed, for example in Matlock Forest.

Most owls are at best crepuscular, and with our most common species, the tawny owl, you are far more likely to hear its familiar calls than to see it. By contrast the moorland-nesting short-eared owl will hunt in the late afternoon, and barn owls, especially when feeding chicks, will do likewise.



While there are some lovely day-flying moths, most species are denizens of the night so you'll need to invest in a moth trap or to join a public moth trapping event to find out more about them.

In lockdown I ran a moth trap in my garden for the first time and was astonished at the variety of species I caught which I had no idea were present.

Among the most dramatic were the hawk moths, the elephant, the eyed and the poplar among them, but the remarkable patterns on the wings of less well-known species also gave me enormous pleasure though quite a few identification headaches!

And it's a while now since I went glowworm watching along my local disused railway line or up in the limestone dales. These strange beetles emit a strong light as the flightless females advertise their presence to passing males.

The world of bats is also hidden to most of us. A couple of pipistrelle bats still flit over

my garden on balmy summer nights, and I've seen noctule bats dashing about over local woodlands. I've watched Daubenton's bats flying low over lakes but that's about the limit of my acquaintance with these fascinating creatures.

The county bat group run evening batwatching sessions so do try to go along and find out more about these mammals, and there are now two local birders who run bird watching trips to see species which you would find hard or impossible to locate on your own, species like woodcock and nightjar.

Other night-time mammals include the beaver (at Willington Wetlands), the otter and the ever decreasing hedgehog whose nocturnal ramblings might include your garden. Why not put out the appropriate food for them, covered up to ensure that local cats, dogs and foxes can't get to it first and set up a trail cam?

And be sure to check that there are access holes in fences so they can get in and out.



Then there are newts which become far more active at night. Take a torch down to your nearest pond and you may get lucky. We have three species, of which the common, also called 'smooth' newt, is indeed the most common.

Of course, many people will spend far more time in their gardens than out on summer trips so drawing wildlife in and providing it with food and shelter is well worth doing if you have a garden. And much of it will emerge at night unobserved.

Even if you only have a balcony you can grow flowers and herbs in containers to attract pollinators, including night-flying moths, whose role in pollination has been seriously underestimated.

Marjoram, thyme, catmint, fennel, lavender are just a few suggestions but there are so many to choose from.

Of course many insects are more active at night than by day, among them the important dung beetles whose larvae play such a key role in breaking down animal dung, such as cowpats.

At the famous Knepp Estate in Sussex, where an unprofitable farm has been rewilded, semi-wild cattle roam freely through the woods and scrubby landscape. Their 'cowpats' have been shown to host a staggering 27 species of dung beetle.

On non-organic farms where wormer chemicals are routinely used, the active ingredients pass through the animal's gut and remain active in their dung – the death knell to any beetle, dung fly or worm. The same is true for sheep and horses.

Next time you see a cowpat, give it a second glance and see how many exit holes are visible on its surface and that will give you a clue about whether wormers were in use.

One insect that maintains a very hidden existence turned up in my garden a couple of years ago purely by landing on a sheet hanging on the washing line one summer's day.

It turned out to be a strange-looking beetle called the cramp ball fungus weevil, Platyrhinus resinosus.

Cramp balls are also known as King Alfred's cakes because they look burnt. These hard, black semi-spherical growths can often be found on ash trees. The larva of this weevil feeds inside the cramp ball before emerging as an adult.

Having many log piles in the garden I discovered several cramp balls on old ash logs and suspect this insect had just emerged from one of them.

Some weevils can seriously damage crops such as wheat, cotton and maize, so they have a bad reputation, but there are many thousands of species of weevil and most live out their lives without affecting us at all but remaining largely unknown even to coleopterists!

The Derbyshire Biological Records Centre (DBRC), housed within the Trust, has just 18 records of my weevil spread across the county.



So please keep your eyes on your washing! You never know what might attach itself to you garments!

In fact, please consider sending in records of whatever you find this summer as long as you are sure of its identity and preferably with an accompanying photograph where possible.

You don't have to be an expert naturalist to help us. You can also simply search for 'Derbyshire Biological Records Centre' online where there are a range of submission



options on the webpage. Even records of very common species are important, not just rare or unusual species.

The DBRC now has over two million records and they form the basis of our knowledge of the county's wildlife, without which conserving it becomes almost impossible. And what's more, 98% of those records have been contributed by volunteer naturalists – bird and butterfly watchers, amateur botanists, weevil specialists and the like.

Record sightings here: /www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/ wildlife/derbyshire-biological-records-centre

# LEGAGY GIVING

# Mark Heaven – Head of Fundraising

Leaving a gift to Derbyshire Wildlife Trust is about life: a legacy commemorated through the diverse wildlife and wild spaces of our natural world.

Imagine leaving a gift that could truly last for generations, a gift that means others can enjoy Derbyshire's wildlife and wild places for the future – just like you do now.

The countryside holds a special place in our memories. Playing outside, splashing in sparkling streams or bounding across sunlit meadows, it's where we were at our most carefree, and DWT are working to ensure that our children and grandchildren will always be able to enjoy such a glorious landscape. Sadly, however, we can no longer take that for granted. Derbyshire's wildlife is under increasing threat from the pressures of modern living, risking the loss of traditional woodlands, grasslands and other habitats. In turn, that means we could lose the wildlife that depends on these delicate habitats, including bees, butterflies, and birds such as woodpeckers and willow tits.

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

- ✓ 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.

Here a Derbyshire Wildlife member, explains why she has decided to leave a legacy for the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust:

"I have been visiting what is now Willington Wetlands from before it became a trust property to birdwatch. Gradually I have witnessed the work of the trust to improve the site and make it accessible and I have witnessed how many species now made it their home.

Then came COVID. Willington Wetlands is my nearest Derbyshire Wildlife Reserve and it was my saviour. I walked there every week. I was able to experience a few hours of normal life and felt blessed to be in nature and realised what life without nature was like. Nature literally saved my life. Out of gratitude to DWT for creating this haven for wildlife I altered my will to leave money for Willington Wetlands to help its future development for the benefit of the habitat and to enable more people to derive as much enjoyment from the reserve as I do."

If you would like to discuss further please contact Mark Heaven on mheaven@derbyshirewt.co.uk



# WITHOUT YOU

# Mark Heaven – Head of Fundraising

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust is blessed to have over 9,500 members which encompasses approximately 20,000 individuals when we factor in family and joint memberships. We are grateful for your membership and support with fundraising, volunteering, and supporting community actions, without which we would not exist.

Your membership fees help us protect local wildlife and the amazing landscape in Derbyshire and you are part of a community of like-minded people supporting us in all areas of our work, including conservation, campaigning, and inspiring local communities about nature.

Derbyshire's nature is facing unimaginable pressure from habitat loss, development and climate change and changing political priorities, so we need our members more than ever.

A great example of this came during our recent campaign to raise funds to acquire Common Farm near Belper. Our public appeal achieved 97% of its £300,000 target

and this has allowed us to move towards completion of the purchase. We received 2,400 individual donations, from members and non-members. A Belper resident, Clare Hartwell, was so inspired by our appeal that she decided to act. "A walk was organised at Common Farm by a group of Amber Valley Green Party members to promote the appeal to residents. Over 60 residents attended. We also got together to deliver leaflets about the appeal and between us we distributed hundreds around Heage, Ambergate, Belper and Ridgeway."

The impact of such action cannot be underestimated; through this local action hundreds of people are aware of our work. These actions inspired 64 individuals to donate towards the Common Farm appeal, who may not have donated otherwise.

Clare's actions inspired employees of the Trust to leaflet areas local to them, which resulted in another 60 donations and engagement with hundreds more local people.



There are many ways that members can take action to support Derbyshire Wildlife Trust: donating, volunteering, leaving a gift in your will, all of which are vital for our survival. If we harness the power of our collective influence, there is no limit to what we can achieve. How you can help nature's recovery in Derbyshire

- Supporting fundraising by creating a fundraising page online and sharing it with your network.
- Delivering leaflets in your local area to promote membership, campaigning, and fundraising.
- Organising a fundraising event, such as a quiz night, a bake sale, a raffle, or a sponsored challenge.
- Inviting your friends, family, colleagues, and community members to join and support our cause.
- Using your voice to support our campaigns to speak up for nature and influence decisionmakers. In this way people power is a form of direct democracy, where we can actively participate in decision-making for our future rather than delegating it to representatives.

During 2024 I hope we will inspire our members and non-members to take more action to protect nature and preserve the future of wildlife in Derbyshire. If you would like to know more about how you can help or have your own ideas, please get in touch at membership@derbyshirewt.co.uk

# **Working in Partnership**

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust rely on corporate members to provide membership fees and sponsorship, working with us to adapt their sites for natures benefit and access to employees to promote our work. We are grateful for the support we receive from our current members.

## **Benefits of Investing in Nature:**



### We are proud to be working in partnership with:

Absolute Networks **Aggregate Industries** Ascot Llovd BASE Been Coffee **Big Wild Thought** Bolinda UK Limited Bowmer Bond Narrow Fabrics Ltd **Breedon Group** Buxton & High Peak Security Services Ltd **CME** Jewellery Diocese of Derby East Midlands Railway Ecobat EPC G F Tomlinson Group Ltd Grangers **Griffith Foods** 

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

Stainborough Hall Limited Tarmac Trading Ltd TDP Tec-Ties Ltd Toyota Motor Manufacturing (UK) Ltd Travel Chapter Trent Barton Weleda White Peak Distillery Wienerberger Ltd



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# **OUR APPROACH**

- We know that through improving diversity and investing in people and culture, comes unique, innovative, and imaginative solutions that can support us to tackle the climate and biodiversity crisis.
- We've worked hard to create a positive, innovative and inclusive culture at DWT, we've invested in an early talent programme to support people to access work in the environment sector and we are delighted that we continue to grow as an organisation which enables us to do more to tackle the biodiversity crisis.
- Working for DWT means you're part of an ambitious and diverse team with opportunities to work on a wide range of projects to develop your experience and skills.
- We champion flexible working options and have adopted a 9-day fortnight working pattern meaning every other Friday is a non-working day.
- We've also introduced initiatives to promote sustainable living with an electric vehicle scheme, cycle to work scheme and we're a Climate Perks employer giving extra time off if you use sustainable transport to go on holiday.
- We ensure the basics are covered too: we are an accredited Lving Wage and Living Hours Employer as well as a Disability Confident Committed Employer.

# THE IMPACT WE'VE SEEN:

We've seen a positive impact from our work so far, from our diversity data improving to 83% of our staff saying they feel Derbyshire Wildlife Trust is an inclusive place to work. We are also delighted that 80% of our early talent participants have progressed into further employment or into further/higher education on related courses.

### WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

Visit our website and follow us on social media to find more about work experience opportunities, paid work and projects! https://jobs.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/

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🔼 🚾 disability

Confident

COMMITTED

# 

Chloe (centre) with staff at Wilder Shipley

# **INTERVIEW BY GEMMA BRADLEY – PRESS OFFICER**

Our early talent programme helps to support green skills needed for the future, creating more green jobs and more awareness of the range of opportunities available.

We've worked hard to break down barriers to accessing work and have scrutinised our role descriptions and adverts to ensure our language is inclusive, as non-gendered as possible and only asks for the criteria that are essential, favouring skills and values over knowledge and experience.

Our trainees are part of the team, and it's important to us that they are treated that way, and that's why we made the commitment to pay all our trainees the real living wage, which is a voluntary amount set by the living wage foundation. We want access to roles in the sector to be affordable and support the creation of opportunities rather than barriers. It's not just about salary though – wellbeing and development are equally important, and we work hard to create an organisational culture that is ambitious, collaborative, and inclusive.

We've welcomed over 30 trainees to our early talent programme so far and look forward to creating more opportunities going forward.

We spoke to Chloe Davenport-Kelly, who joined the Trust as a trainee last year about what it's really like to start a career in this space.

# When did you know that you wanted to get into working in the environmental sector?

Growing up in a nature-positive household set the foundation for my passion for conservation. Regular visits to zoos and wildlife establishments sparked a fascination with the intricate beauty of our planet's biodiversity. Watching "Deadly 60" on CBBC and David Attenborough documentaries in my childhood played a pivotal role, inspiring my dream to become the 'girl' Attenborough. Recognising the lack of representation for female conservationists on TV, I aimed to break the mold!

# How did you find the process of finding and applying for traineeships or entry level jobs?

Navigating the path of entry-level positions in the conservation-education sector was undeniably challenging. After completing my BSc in Animal Management (Zoo and Wildlife), the competitive nature of the industry posed a significant hurdle.

The search for opportunities was like a quest for hidden treasure, with each prospect



seeming like gold dust. This role not only aligns with my passion for wildlife but also serves as a stepping stone to acquire the expertise necessary to make a meaningful impact in this dynamic and vital field.

# What have been the highlights from the first six months of your traineeship?

The first six months of my traineeship have been a whirlwind of enriching experiences. Engaging with schools, imparting knowledge to children about the significance of wildlife, and empowering them to make a difference has been a profound highlight. Undertaking diverse training programs, including becoming a Forest School Leader, obtaining Outdoor First Aid certification, and completing a Trainer Skills course, has been nothing short of amazing. These opportunities have not only broadened my skill set but also provided invaluable hands-on experience crucial for my future endeavours in conservation and outdoor education.

# How have you found working in the sector? Is it what you expected?

Working in the sector has been everything and more than I expected. As a trainee, I anticipated being under the shadow of those more experienced, but I've been pleasantly surprised by the trust and autonomy given to me in my role. The freedom to develop my skills and experiences according to my interests has been a rewarding aspect. I've had the opportunity to work with various staff members across the Trust, from engaging with communities and marketing, to handson experiences on reserves.

# What are your hopes for the future in your career in conservation and what are you looking forward to next?

My hopes for the future in my conservation career are centred around inspiring others to join the crucial fight for wildlife through my work. Whether it's encouraging someone to plant wildflowers in their garden, rallying a community to take collective action for wildlife, or sparking a child's passion to become the next Attenborough, as I once aspired to be, every instance of inspiration would be immensely rewarding.

# What advice would you give to anyone looking to start a career in conservation or move into the sector?

For anyone aspiring to start a career in conservation or transition into the sector, my advice is to dive into volunteering and gain as much work experience as possible. Seize every opportunity across various areas, even if it doesn't align precisely with your desired role. Many conservation jobs demand experience, so accumulating an array of diverse experiences is invaluable. Remember that many skills are transferable and will contribute to your professional growth in the long run.

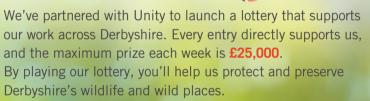


WE NEED PEOPLE FROM ALL AGES AND COMMUNITIES TO ENGAGE IN SOLVING THE WILD-LIFE AND NATURE CRISES, AND IN TURN BECOME HEALTHIER AND HAPPIER FROM CONNECTING WITH NATURE. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON LEARNING THROUGH NATURE AND COURSES AVAILABLE, VISIT WWW.DERBYSHIREWILDLIFETRUST.ORG.UK/ EDUCATION-ACTIVITIES.



# Win for Wildlife Give wildlife a helping hand with our weekly lottery





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For more information visit: www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/lottery