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DerbyshireWildlifeTrust

On the cover

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THE SUNDAY TIMES
**Best Places
to Work 2024**



**Derbyshire
Wildlife Trust**



Jo Smith

Chief Executive Officer

Welcome

The world is changing fast. Climate extremes, biodiversity loss, and shifting landscapes are no longer distant threats; they are happening now, shaping the places we call home. But here's the thing: change isn't just something we react to. It's something we can drive.

At Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, we believe that the future isn't written yet. Now is the time to act, to turn things around. And later this spring we will be unveiling our boldest, most ambitious plan yet to make that happen.

We are not talking about small tweaks. We are talking about real transformation, for landscapes, for wildlife, and for people. Because nature's recovery isn't just about habitats and species. It's about healthier, happier communities. It's about rethinking the way we live, work, and build. It's about ensuring that everyone, everywhere, has a stake in shaping a wilder future.

Over the past year, we've been listening, learning, and pushing ourselves to think bigger. What does a wilder Derbyshire look like in 2030? How do we move beyond protection to large-scale restoration? How do we make sure that nature isn't a privilege, but a right?

Later this spring, we will share our answers, and invite you to be part of them. Because this isn't just our plan. It's a call to action for everyone who believes in a future where people and wildlife thrive.

We can't wait to share it with you. Thank you for your support.

Jo Smith

Chief Executive Officer

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Derbyshire News

SPOTTED



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



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January 2025 © Lorna Dickinson
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© Sean Barnett Photography
5. Kestrel – Tapton
February 2025 © Emily Price
6. Waxwing – Hassop
January 2025 © Peter Williams

Government's long-awaited **wild beaver restoration** policy announced



The Government's long-awaited wild beaver restoration policy is a positive step towards beaver reintroductions across England and means restoring this important native species in Derbyshire in the future, is a real possibility.

On the 28th February the Government announced that applications to return beavers into river catchments in England will be accepted. This paves the way for this native species to roam wild in British rivers and lakes once more, helping to create wetlands and increase biodiversity.

Following the licensed release of four beavers in an enclosure at our Willington Wetlands Reserve in 2021, we have seen first-hand the important role they play in stabilising water flow during times of drought, improving water quality and boosting wildlife habitat for a range of species.

It is vital that any species reintroduction programme is carried out in accordance with best practice and researched collaboratively. Through the Derbyshire Beaver Feasibility Assessment

Initiative, we are in the early stages of engaging and listening to local agencies, organisations and community representatives to understand the practicalities of wild beavers in Derbyshire's landscape and will be undertaking feasibility assessments and consultation throughout 2025.

We are committed to ensuring any wild beaver reintroduction programmes are sustainable and ensure the best outcomes for people and nature. We look forward to working towards a future where beavers could be part of our landscape for years to come.

For more information see:
derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/derbyshire-beavers

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Latest News



£100,000 to support farming for nature!

We are pleased to announce two new projects to support farmers and landowners to generate sustainable income, whilst facilitating nature's recovery!

Support Farming for Nature

In the autumn, we were awarded £100,000 by the Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (NEIRF) to support our scheme, known as 'Farming Nature Derwent: A place-based Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) scheme for farmers and land managers'. The project aims to develop investment ready business models for a range of land managers by identifying the ecosystem services that they can deliver on their land.

Through this project, we're seeking a win-win outcome, supporting farmers' and landowners' livelihoods whilst ensuring that the habitats created can be maintained, and making and protecting more space for nature in Derbyshire.

Working in partnership with six landowners, we will use our specialist knowledge to test and troubleshoot each stage of the Green Finance Institute's toolkit, establishing the most viable Natural Capital markets for different farms at a variety of scales, and developing a roadmap for others to do the same in the future.

For peat's sake

In the third round of the Carbon Innovation Fund, a partnership between Co-op and their charity, the Co-op Foundation, we were selected amongst seven organisations across the UK to develop innovative ways to grow the food we need without damaging precious UK peatlands.

Farmers and landowners face huge challenges which are preventing peatland restoration at scale. The primary purpose of our project is to investigate the possibility of maintaining or improving farm income and calorie output while delivering lowland peatland restoration and nature recovery.

Working in partnership with three farmers, we are building on our expertise and our work through a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) with the University of Derby, to explore markets for alternative products to traditional beef, sheep and

dairy production to investigate opportunities for peatland restoration alongside sustainable food production.

We are absolutely delighted to have been awarded both funds to move our farming for nature projects forward. We want to see far more nature-based solutions across the county, delivering the most effective solutions for society whilst helping nature's recovery!

You can read more about each project on our website news page.



Wild Peak Community Projects

Local landowners, groups, organisations and individuals with big ideas on taking action for nature and people in the peaks, have been awarded £60,000 from the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust Community Fund.

Following two rounds of applications in October and December last year, 27 bids were selected from across the Peak District to receive financial support for projects that aim to make a huge difference to the local area, communities and help restore nature.

Successful applications needed to be time sustainable and not require ongoing funding from the Trust; demonstrate how projects would support land or areas in the Wild Peak boundary; show how the local community, landowners or local people have helped in the identification of

activity or have been consulted/engaged; and show what difference will be made.

Among the successful applicants are projects to create ponds and wetlands, reintroduce species, create new and improved habitats, install bat/bird/hedgehog houses, increase accessibility to nature and wild spaces, and develop community led projects and events to connect people with nature and encourage them to make long lasting change.

We will be sharing stories from these communities throughout their projects, keep an eye out on our website for more information.

Community Garden © Katrina Martin, 2020VISION

Branching Out



**Charlotte Taylor –
Wilder Communities
Trainee**

Woodlands cover approximately 13% of the UK's land area and support an abundance of plants and wildlife. That percentage used to be much greater, which is why it's important to protect the woodlands we have left and nurture new woodland.

Our woodlands play a crucial role in combating climate change, absorbing approximately 21 million tonnes of carbon dioxide each year. That's around a third of the carbon dioxide emitted by cars every year in the UK. Woodlands also help to limit flooding as they store water on the land, which slows the flow of water downstream after extreme rain events.

According to the Forestry Commission, for an area to be classified as a woodland it must: cover an area of 0.5 hectares minimum, be at least 20 metres wide, and have a potential tree canopy cover of at least 20%*.

Woodlands vary greatly in their size, age and species richness, and Derbyshire showcases a variety, from the ancient woodland of Lea Wood to the wood pasture iconic of the White Peak landscape. Ancient woodlands have complex ecosystems that support rich habitats and species diversity. Look out for lily of the valley, wood anemone and hart's-tongue fern, which are ancient woodland plant indicators.

Much of the wildlife within our woodlands relies on active management to provide a varied woodland structure and different habitats, such as the creation of deadwood piles, which support beetles and fungi, and maintaining sunlit glades and woodland edges, which provide a home for insects like the speckled wood butterfly. Without management our woodlands risk becoming dark, over-shaded and dominated by mature trees without variation in structure, age or cover.

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's rewilding aims encourage management that mimics the behaviours of large herbivores, such as elk and bison, which existed in our woodlands several thousands of years ago. Their behaviours, such as breaking through vegetation with antlers and horns and creating uneven ground with their hooves, helped to shape a varied woodland

structure. Management today can include the introduction of proxy species, such as highland cattle or, where this isn't possible yet, mimicking their behaviours through coppicing and scrub cutting.

Some woodland habitats are lesser known and often overlooked. For example, standing deadwood (a dead tree still standing) are rare habitats which certain species rely on. Greater spotted woodpeckers have adapted to have strong beaks and long tongues to excavate nest holes and extract invertebrates from standing deadwood and they offer safe and dry roosting locations for bats.¹ Look and listen out for woodpeckers on your winter woodland walks; they're easier to spot high in the trees once the leaves have fallen.

*Definition of trees and woodland – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

¹Deadwood in Woodland – British Habitats – Woodland Trust

Wet woodland or 'carr' is also lesser known due to it being wet, boggy and sometimes inaccessible. Rowsley Sidings is a good example in Derbyshire. Wet woodland is characterised by willows, birches and alder that thrive in poorly drained or seasonally flooded soils. Willow tits rely on this habitat and standing deadwood for nesting, but they are our fastest declining non-migratory bird in the UK. Possible reasons for their decline include habitat loss, lack of connectivity, habitat deterioration and competition from other bird species.

²Willow Tit Recovery in the Derwent Valley | Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's 'Nature Based Solutions' project conducted a feasibility assessment which showed that key natural processes need to be reinstated to create the willow tit's preferred habitat. This includes implementing 'leaky dams' as beavers would create to retain ground moisture, reintroducing large herbivore proxies, such as cattle, or mimicking their disturbance through felling and coppicing mature trees to maintain diversity in canopy height, and kickstarting the natural regeneration of suitable vegetation, such as willow and blackthorn.²

Derwent Living Forest Boundary

National Forest Boundary

The Northern Forest Boundary



Derbyshire's woodland coverage sits below the national average of 13%, meaning it is a wood-depleted county. However, we're making progress towards changing that with the support of the community. Our Derwent Living Forest Programme aims to create 30,000 hectares of wooded habitats and wetland by 2050, including woodland, hedgerows, orchards and wood pasture. This will improve habitat connectivity between the woodlands of the National Forest in the south and the soon to be established woodlands of the Northern Forest in the north. North-south connectivity is critically important to allow the movement of species in response to climate

change. Connecting our woodlands won't only improve species richness but will provide more space for communities to access nature for their own wellbeing and learning.

Wilder Wirksworth is one community group taking great strides towards enhancing the local area for wildlife. In 2023, the group purchased a 10-acre field on the edge of town through successful crowdfunding. The group have since worked closely with DWT to raise biodiversity, create different habitats, preserve the existing footpaths, and improve access to the site. Together, we planted 250m of new hedgerows. That's a lot of trees – 2,500 in total!

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To learn more about our Derwent Living Forest Programme see:
derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/derwent-living-forest
 Or scan this code with your phone

Peak District UPLANDS

A Landscape of Loss and Opportunity



Matt Buckler – Executive Director of Strategy & Innovation

Derbyshire lies at the meeting point of Britain's uplands and lowlands. The Pennine chain, which separates Yorkshire from Lancashire, begins in Derbyshire within the hills of, the Peak District. The region's uplands are formed of two distinct types: limestone, which shapes the peaks and dales of the White Peak, and impermeable gritstone, which has a low pH, is nutrient-poor, and forms the rugged landscape of the Dark Peak.

The Dark Peak actually starts near Matlock and curves north-west towards the county boundary at Black Hill (and beyond). It is made up of a range of different habitats, much of which is in poor condition.

The highest, wettest parts of these hills are covered with deep peat, or blanket bog. These store huge amounts of carbon and have

been formed by the squashing of a range of plants, most notably sphagnum mosses and cottongrasses. Industrial pollution has taken its toll on these amazing habitats and, until recently, there were huge areas of bare peat on the Peak District blanket bogs. Trees are rare here when the blanket bogs are in good condition, as they can't cope with the lack of oxygen, caused by the very high water table; blanket bogs hold water like a sponge.

Flowering heather, Peak District National Park © 2020 Vision



Golden plover © Tim Birch

But when they've started to dry out through burning to promote the growth of heather or grass, trees can establish and make the drying out worse. This also makes wildfires more likely, which can devastate these fragile habitats very quickly. On blanket bogs, trees are a bad sign. Key species to look, or listen, out for are mountain hares, golden plover, dunlin, meadow pipits and skylarks. You're much less likely to see birds of prey, which are other important species of these habitats, except for kestrel, short-eared owl and possibly merlin, as other species have been persecuted to very low levels, and local extinction.

The driest areas of damaged blanket bog and mineral-based soils are covered by dwarf heath. Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) typically dominates these areas. This is due to deliberate management practices, including regular burning, to support red grouse for shooting, for which heather is a primary food source. As a result, Derbyshire's striking purple moorlands are a product of intensive land management rather than a naturally occurring habitat. Heather, unlike many other species of the area, responds well to burning and drying of peat soils, which means that this type of management leads to large, uniform areas of this one species.



Sphagnum capillifolium © Chris Lawrence

The key thing missing from it all is complexity. Where the peats are shallow, on hillsides and some hilltops, there should be far more trees, with an understorey of lots of different dwarf shrubs; heathers, bilberry, crowberry and gorse, for example. Woodland has been increasing in cloughs (steep-sided valleys) and on other mineral soils, but we'd like to see a mosaic of different habitats blending together, with blanket bog, fens and springs merging with deciduous woodland, with those dwarf shrubs. From a distance, looking at the landscape, the changes between woodland, heathland, blanket bog and semi-improved grasslands, happen very abruptly.

The transitional habitats are missing from much of our upland landscape.

This lack of habitat and landscape complexity means that there are species missing too. Red grouse numbers are unsurprisingly doing reasonably well, as much of the management of the Peak District uplands has been for this species. But black grouse, a species of transitional habitats and formerly common in the Peak District, became extinct here in the 1980s. The absence of hen harriers in our uplands is well known, but what is less well known is that one of the last records of breeding golden eagles in England was in Derbyshire.



Black grouse © Mark Hamblin

The highest parts of Derbyshire really come into their own in the winter, bringing arctic conditions right down the county. Over winter, mountain hares are often very visible as they turn white as the days get shorter. This makes them very hard to see when the tops are covered in snow, but easy to see when they aren't. Most other species leave for warmer temperatures and our hills and moors become very bleak (but beautiful) with the cold weather.

Our upland habitats are powerful providers of ecosystem services, storing huge amounts of carbon in peats, holding and cleaning water through sphagnum mosses, reducing the risk of flooding downstream. These areas are used by millions of people every year as places to relax and recharge their batteries, benefitting their health and wellbeing.



Golden eagle © Wildstock



Mountain hare © Luke Massey



Meadow Pipit © Mark Hamblin

What can you do to help? The main risks facing our upland habitats relate to wildfire, which can have a devastating impact on the habitats and species. The highest-risk periods are in spring, before the plants start growing again and after droughts in the summer. Management burning on moorlands is only allowed between the 31st October and the 1st April, so outside those times, please report any fires to the fire brigade. In addition, the biggest cause of wildfires is from abandoned disposable barbecues, so please take a picnic, rather than using a barbecue.

Pond Life

The best way to boost wildlife in your garden

Boosting the wildlife in your garden couldn't be simpler or more exciting. What you need is a garden pond. Believe me you won't regret it, says the BBC's Justin Rowlatt.



Justin Rowlatt

is the BBC's first ever climate editor. He describes his job as reporting from the front line of climate change. Justin is also a huge fan of ponds. He put his in three years ago and hasn't looked back.

There'll be a little digging. You need to go a bit deeper than you'd expect. Just over a metre is good. All the wonderful pond creatures that are going to make their home in your garden need somewhere to shelter away from the ice that will form in winter.

Then you'll need a pond liner, gravel, some native UK pond plants and aquatic compost bags. Then you just fill it with tap water and wait. This is when the magic happens.

During the first week or so your pond will go a sickly shade of green as algae makes itself at home. If you're lucky, you'll get your first creature in the second or third week. Mine was a hoglouse, a watery cousin of the woodlouse.

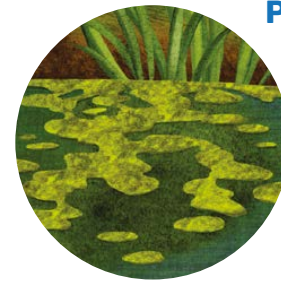
Next came mosquito larvae. I had loads, wriggling and squirming beneath the surface. I was

transfixed – my wife was not so impressed. But don't worry, they are the lure that is going to tempt in other creatures for whom mosquito larvae are the tastiest of treats.

The nymphs of dragonflies and damselflies can't get enough of them. Frogs and newts love them too. And if any do manage to hatch into actual mozzies, they'll be dinner for swallows, swifts and bats.

What you've created is an entire ecosystem, an intricate food web. The algae is food for the insects who are food for the frogs who are food for hedgehogs. You get the picture.

When you find yourself wondering why you are spending so long just staring at your new pond here's the answer: what is unfolding before you is nothing less than the story of life on earth.



Pond algae

Learn to love your algae. It is the bottom of the food chain and without it your pond would be a lot less enticing.



Yellow flag iris

There are lots of water iris species around the world but only one real choice for UK ponds, in my opinion. The yellow flag iris, the only aquatic iris native to the UK.



Hoglouse

Hoglice are an aquatic relative of the woodlouse. And before you get sniffy about these little lice, you should know they are one of the most ancient animal species on earth at more than 300 million years old.



Hornwort

This is one of the workhorses of a thriving pond. Hornwort is a dark green plant that floats beneath the surface releasing life-giving oxygen. But beware, just like algae, happy hornwort will grow like topsy.



Rat-tailed maggot

This is one of my favourite pond creatures. Think of maggots but with snorkels attached to their bums. Except because rat-tailed maggots are aquatic, they are wonderfully clean and mutate into beautiful hoverflies.



Large red damselfly

On a sunny spring day there is always at least one red damselfly hovering, like a tiny helicopter, over my pond. These creatures live out their entire lives before your eyes and their nymphs Hoover up mozzie larvae.



Marsh marigolds

There are few sights more cheerful than a clump of bright yellow marsh marigolds. Think buttercups but bigger and framed by dramatic dark foliage. They provide a hiding place for frogs and nectar for insects.



Common frog

We have three. All slightly different colours. My wife insists she recognises each one. You'll be spellbound as they lay their spawn. The tiny black dots in the centre evolve into surprisingly rapacious tadpoles and then, majestic frogs.

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For more tips on how to create a wildlife pond see: derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-pond



Mini Ponds



If you don't think you have space for a pond, think again.

Mini ponds are incredibly valuable for wildlife, and a network of small ponds in a neighbourhood could be better than just a few large ones.

Not only that but they are cheap, easy to create and even easier to take care of. Mini ponds can be constructed from a whole range of containers!

Your upcycled pond

Your pond will need a wide 'neck' so wildlife can get in and out. Other than that, the shape really doesn't matter! Sink your pond or add a ramp for creatures to access. Be creative – is there anything that you could upcycle, such as a washing-up bowl, wheelbarrow basin, sawn-off plastic dustbin, half barrel, rubber trug, large plant pot or sink?



You will need:

- a watertight container*



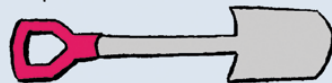
- old bricks, rocks and pebbles



- pond plants



- spade



* Is there anything that you can upcycle? It could be an old washing-up bowl, sink or even a plant pot. Aim for 20-30cm deep.

How to build a mini wildlife pond

- 1 Choose a spot. Your pond will need light, but not full sunlight all day. You can dig a hole and sink your container, or just have it sitting on top.
- 2 If the container isn't watertight, e.g. an old plant pot, then add a piece of pond liner.

- 3 Add a layer of gravel and rocks.
- 4 Fill your pond with rainwater (tap water contains chemicals).
- 5 Start planting... you only need two or three plants.
- 6 Now watch and wait! Wildlife will come to your pond of its own accord.

One vertical growing plant that reaches out of the water e.g. flowering rush

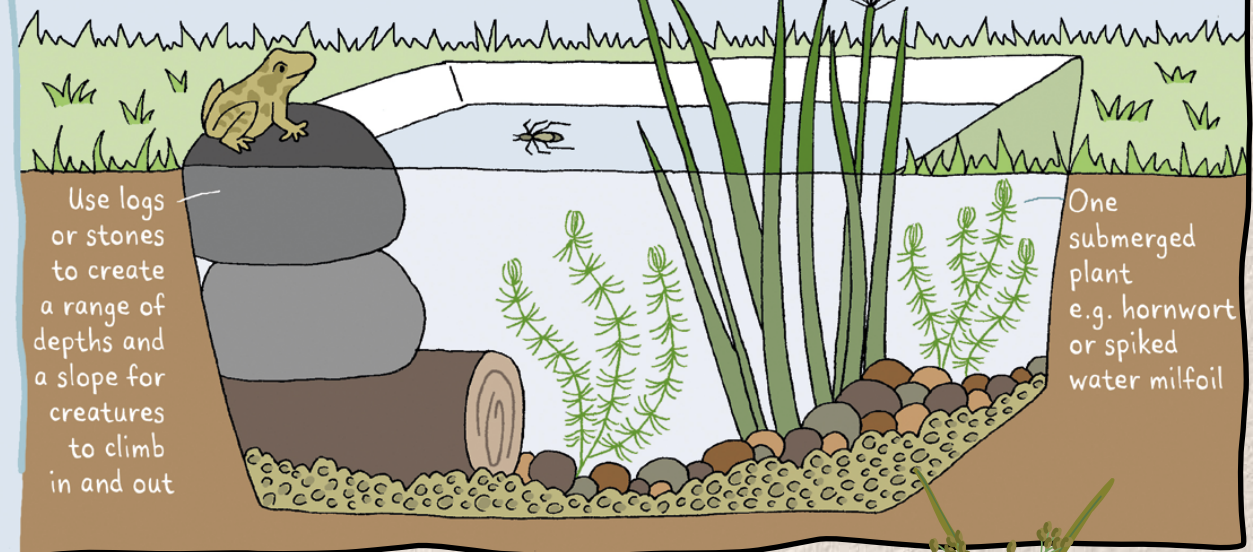


Illustration: Corinne Welch
© Copyright Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts 2019 and Royal Horticultural Society 2019

Don't introduce frogs, fish or even water from another pond as this can spread disease.



Restoring the Wild Peak

From Green Fields to Thriving Habitats



Dave Savage, Landscape Recovery Manager, talks to White Peak farmers Richard and Greg Wheeldon, who are transitioning from traditional farming to creating habitats like species-rich grasslands and wood pastures, benefitting wildlife, improving soil health, and fostering climate resilience. Their efforts, supported by partnerships and funding initiatives, exemplify a collaborative model for landscape-scale restoration, offering a hopeful vision for the future of farming and conservation.

Britain's magnificent meadows and grasslands deliver so many benefits to humans and wildlife. They provide food for people and pollinators like bees, prevent floods by soaking up rain, and sequester carbon to hold back climate change. Despite their importance, the State of Nature report showed that we have lost 97% of our wildflower meadows since the 1930s,

with more than half of all flowering plants and bryophytes declining in their range. Our society is suffering from shifting baseline syndrome. Also known as generational amnesia, it has been defined as a gradual change in our accepted norms and expectations for the environment across generations.

Dale Grange Farm



Richard Wheeldon with DWT Joanna Hill

The general public often views green fields and drystone walls as signs of a thriving natural landscape. However, those who live in or regularly explore the area know that nature is largely confined to the dales, with abundant wildlife or natural corridors being rare on the plateau. Characteristic species are missing or are in decline; it's rare to see curlew, lapwing or even hare nowadays.

Some farmers in Derbyshire are taking a different approach to managing their land. Richard and Greg Wheeldon own almost 400 acres of land in the White Peak, bordering our Deepdale nature reserve. They are embarking on an ambitious nature recovery program which involves taking their improved pasture out of production:



Birds-foot-trefoil © Kayleigh Wright

"During our lifetime we have had to change the way we farm many times. We were a traditional and then semi-intensive dairy farm in the 90s. Our farm didn't suit this, and it was hard to be competitive. Moving to organic beef and sheep in the last 20 years. More recently we have realised that we need to build resilience into our farm. Into the farm business, into the nature, into the soil and into the habitats. Having looked at many farms, we realised that by building in permanence and diversity we may begin to isolate ourselves from market uncertainty and secure a farm that may have some climate resilience. Undertaking wood pasture and species-rich grassland on the farm should allow us to add in scrub-rich and wooded habitats that provide shade, shelter and browsing for livestock and help retain valuable water on farm."



Dale Grange Farm

Wood pasture is a rare and threatened habitat made up of a variety of different habitats. They are actively grazed and consist of large areas of open meadow, scattered trees and small copses. I asked Richard how this will work with the beef herd the farm currently has. "The key is to get the grazing right with not too many animals that all the trees end up being grazed off, but enough that the meadows don't turn into woodlands." It requires a dramatic change in their farming model. "We have sold our herd of 120 organic Aberdeen Angus and hope to buy a much smaller herd of 40 Longhorns. This will reduce the grazing intensity and give us more valuable animals to sell." The only missing feature is the veteran trees often found in this type of habitat, which provides habitat for beetles, flies and spiders in the dead and fallen wood the tree provides.



Common blue © Bob Coyle

The abundance of wildlife in a well-managed meadow is vast. Birds like skylark and meadow pipit nest on the ground, concealed in vegetation, whilst some butterflies and moths rely on grassland for every stage of their life cycle. A good example of a food plant is the beautiful bright yellow and orange bird's-foot trefoil, locally known as eggs and bacon. In Derbyshire the leaves are an important food source for the caterpillars of common blue, green hairstreak, clouded yellow, and dingy skipper butterflies and the six spot burnet moth:

"Whilst we know a little about nature friendly farming we are by no means experts in ecology, botany or nature restoration. Working with partners at DWT, we have been able to discuss nature restoration and natural process approaches to land management. These conversations have shaped, and will continue to shape, the decisions we will make."

The grasses are just as important as the herbs in meadows. Richard is planting a new seed mixture across almost 100 acres of his land, containing

in addition to the herbs meadow and red fescue, timothy, smooth and rough meadow grass, sheep's fescue and meadow foxtail. This mix is good for grayling, gatekeeper, Essex skipper and meadow brown, and it provides refuge for small mammals like field voles and mice. These in turn provide food for barn owl and kestrel, showing the vast ecosystem supported by farms.

Richard and Greg also plan to plant some herbal leys on the farm. Herbal leys have traditionally been used to build soil fertility and structure in an arable rotation, acting as a minimal-input, four-year break crop, but they bring significant benefits not only to the soil health, but also to the health and diet of livestock and the wider environment. The mixture of species, including grasses, legumes and herbs, ensures a longer growing season, and certain species included in the mixtures, such as sainfoin, chicory and bird's-foot trefoil, have anthelmintic properties, which helps to reduce the worm burden in livestock, creating less reliance on artificial wormers. This is of tremendous benefit to species like bumblebee and hoverfly that benefit from the array of flowers.

Richard and Greg are part of the Wild Peak Network, a group of over 70 landowners, covering 2000 ha of land in Derbyshire, who are working to make management of their land more nature friendly. Of these landowners, 26 have taken advantage of our £1.7 million Species Survival project. This project is delivering habitat improvement with the aim of funding ongoing management through green finance and countryside stewardship payments. The aim is to sell the ecosystem services to companies who would benefit from their purchase. These are things like flood prevention and carbon sequestration. A mix of funding options for the landowners will hopefully provide an income in an innovative way to expand nature's recovery at a landscape-scale:

"I don't think farming can continue as it is at the moment, but I do feel that there is a good future for farming. Character areas such as the White Peak are likely to attract landscape-scale schemes, either funded by government or via private finance. Farmers that build resilience into their farms, their farm landscapes and into their biodiversity may well thrive. Farmers collaborating together at a landscape-scale may well be able to support each other, as well as nature."

The Wild Peak Network is a group of people and communities to facilitate, support and celebrate nature's recovery across the region. Whether you are a landowner, a business, a local authority, a community group or just an interested individual, you can get involved!

Learn more here:
derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wild-peak

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Dale Grange Farm



Long-eared owl with vole © Tim Melling



Six spot burnet moth on red clover

If you don't count it, it doesn't count!

Did you know that Derbyshire Wildlife Trust hosts the **Derbyshire Biological Records Centre**? Collating and combining data on all species across Derbyshire. We work closely with County Recorders, local natural history groups, charities and individuals to collect new records on an annual basis. It's so important that we know what is out there – even the common species we need to know about. So get sharing today!

Share what you're seeing in your local area:
[derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/
wildlife/record-sighting](https://derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife/record-sighting)

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In Sickness and in Health

Nature could save NHS £millions

Dom Higgins, head of health and education at the Wildlife Trusts, explores the sickness of nature disconnect, how the NHS bears the brunt and how the Wildlife Trusts can help with preventable illnesses.



Dom Higgins

is head of health and education at the Wildlife Trusts, where he leads their policy and campaigning work in these areas. He is passionate about creating a stronger and more resilient healthcare system that keeps natural connections at its heart.

Over 20 million people in the UK have a musculoskeletal condition, such as arthritis or back pain, and over 5 million have diabetes. In May 2023 the number of people waiting for an operation was at a record high of 7.3 million – and some are predicting a rise over 10 million, with one in five people on a hospital waiting list. Long-term sickness is resulting in 2.8 million people of working age being economically inactive. How will the NHS survive?

John from Sheffield had a quadruple heart bypass. He said “I was in a bad way and would have spiralled into being a recluse. I hate to think really. I had PTSD and sleepless nights.” Liz has early stage dementia and couldn’t go anywhere by herself. Just two examples of the longer term recovery from illness and plethora of mental health issues effecting our population today.

But there’s a quiet revolution going on in the world of health and social care, which involves taking part in outdoor activities – from gardening and woodwork to wildlife conservation and walks in the park. That’s because many illnesses and ailments are preventable. For example, physical inactivity can cause heart and breathing conditions, while social isolation and loneliness often lead to depression.

A recent highlight in my career was the opportunity to present the findings of the Wildlife Trusts’ report A Natural Health Service at the Lancet UK Public Health Science Conference. The Lancet is a prestigious international medical journal that advances medical science and practice worldwide. The Lancet Conference highlights public health research from the UK and Ireland. I presented evidence showing that ‘green prescribing’ programmes, where GPs and healthcare professionals prescribe time in nature as treatment and therapy, could have significant

benefits. If rolled out to 1.2 million people, these programmes could save the NHS £100 million annually. The public health professionals’ view was that these cost savings were underestimated.

The Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust’s Wild at Heart programme reduced costs for the NHS associated with the mental health conditions of their 82 participants over a year by £38,646. The project has literally been a lifeline for John and Liz, connecting them both to the simple pleasures of nature. Now they have a reason to go out, and they look forward to walks in the local park, learning about birds and photography.

Over 8,000 people took part in seven Wildlife Trusts’ social prescribing pilots over two years. The pilots were spread across the country, with Gwent Wildlife Trust and the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester & North Merseyside leading them. 57% of participants came from the most economically under-served places and 21% from ethnic minority communities. There were big reductions in anxiety and depression, and big increases in happiness and life satisfaction, alongside an increase in feeling that ‘life is worthwhile.’

Nature prescribing needs to become part of a wider Natural Health Service, one that works hand in hand with the National Health Service.

This is how the NHS will survive.



Wildlife Postcards

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

From the lush grasslands of Scotland to the arctic tundra! I'm sending you a postcard from Greenland, where my relatives and I gather to raise our young. It's a wonderful place full of wildflowers and icy landscapes. I'll be back in the autumn!

Branta

Pink-footed goose © Margaret Holland



SNOW BUNTING

I'm writing to you from a breathtaking patch of snow-covered tundra, where I've come to nest and raise my young as part of a thriving flock of snow buntings. Did you know, my Arctic home spans a vast area, stretching from Alaska and Canada, all the way to Greenland and the Scandinavian countries? We migrate in huge flocks, some numbering thousands of birds, and fly as far as 2,000 miles to reach our wintering grounds in the southern hemisphere. Phew I got here at last.

Warm hugs from the Arctic

Snow-fleck



REDWING

Greetings from the stunning landscapes of Iceland amidst the lava fields and roaring waterfalls! The air is crisp, and vibrant green fields stretch as far as the eye can see. I spend the long days searching for delicious insects to feed my chicks, who chirp eagerly from our cozy nest, but once they've flown I'll be back as the leaves turn.

With warm wishes, your feathered friend!

Raud

Redwing © Jon Hawkins, Surrey Hills Photography



Snow bunting © David Martin



Whooper swan © Nick Upton, 2020VISION



WHOOPEER SWAN

Greetings from the stunning waterways of summer in Siberia! The sun sparkles on the surface of the river and the air is filled with the joyous songs of fellow swans. I've found a perfect spot by the lake, where the reeds sway and the wildflowers dance in the breeze to raise a family.

I hope you're enjoying a lovely summer too!

Wings and wishes,
Cygnus

We Care About What Matters to You



Helen Watkinson –
Membership Manager

I can't believe it's almost been a year since I joined Derbyshire Wildlife Trust! It's been fantastic meeting so many of you and seeing your passion for our county and local wildlife.

From supporting campaigns like Grow Don't Mow to creating wildlife-friendly gardens and sharing your wildlife sightings, you are a vital voice for nature in your communities.

Your membership fees make a huge difference, helping us protect wildlife and create a Derbyshire where nature and people thrive together. Thank you for your support!



Helen at DWT wreath making

Have your say

In spring 2024, we asked for your feedback on Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. You told us you wanted more in-person contact with our teams, so we've introduced expert-led talks and exclusive member events.

Some of you joined our Christmas wreath-making and nature photography workshops, and we're planning more walks and nature events for summer.

But we'd love to hear more from you! Let us know what you'd like to see by completing your 2025 members' survey. The more feedback we receive, the better we can shape your membership experience!

Scan here to take part or visit:
surveymonkey.com/r/F9KH73F



Derbyshire Wildlife Trust Event Highlights

30th April: Introduction to Derbyshire's Wilder Landscapes

Join us for an online webinar exploring the stunning landscapes of Derbyshire, delving into the county's unique geography, its varied habitats, and the ways in which human activity has shaped this region.

Venue: Online Webinar

Time: 7pm – 7:45pm

Price: FREE

4th June: Introduction to Butterfly Identification

Get practicing your pollinators this summer and discover our most colourful critters on a transect session.

Venue: Carsington Water Visitor Centre

Time: 9:30am – 1:30pm

Price: £40

12th July: Introduction to Map Reading

Develop your field skills and confidence to get off the beaten track this year and plot your next outdoor adventure.

Venue: Middleton by Wirksworth

Time: 10am – 3pm

Price: £45

21st August: Introduction to Identifying Trees in Summer

Leaf nothing to chance when out in the woods by getting to know our native trees on first name terms.

Venue: Carsington Water Visitor Centre

Time: 9:30am – 1pm

Price: £40

12th September: Adult Bat Walk & Talk

Go batty for bats on an evening session to learn all about these amazing night-flying hunters.

Venue: Carsington Water Visitor Centre

Time: 7pm – 9:30pm

Price: £15

October: Introduction to Fungi

Master those mushrooms and delve into the fascinating world of fungus this autumn.

Details to follow – check our events page

29th November: Christmas Wreath Making Workshop

Make your festive season sustainable on this popular workshop, using natural materials sourced in Derbyshire.

Venue: Carsington Water Visitor Centre

Time: 10am – 12pm

Price: £40

15th December: Introduction to Identifying Trees in Winter

Think beyond the Christmas tree and learn to identify common species in winter without their leaves!

Venue: Carsington Water Visitor Centre

Time: 9:30am – 1pm

Price: £40

To book on to these courses and other events please see derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/things-to-do

SCAN ME



Marbled white butterfly

My Wildlife

In spring 2023, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust secured the purchase of 60 acres of land for nature and local people to enjoy at Old Whittington, to the north of Chesterfield.



Anne Kangley - A Local's Story of Hope and Transformation

Through rewilding, this piece of land, now known as 'Wild Whittington', has become a mosaic of habitats, bolstering a vital corridor between the neighbouring woodlands and supporting nature's recovery in Chesterfield and the surrounding areas.

As a resident of Old Whittington for 15 years, Anne knows the site well and has watched first-hand as the site has transformed over the last 18 months – wildlife has returned, and plants have emerged. With the nature reserve right on her doorstep, she talks to us about what nature means to her and why she welcomes it to this corner of Chesterfield.

How does having access to nature on your doorstep impact your daily life?

Wild Whittington is very special. The vista from the fields over Chesterfield is very calming and beautiful, and the fields themselves are full of nature, flora and fauna. I am so grateful to be able to walk here daily. It is a fantastic way to ground myself each morning and I enjoy seeing the changing seasons ring in so close to my home.

Have you always been interested in nature and wildlife in this way or did something spark your passion?

As a child I spent school holidays caravanning around the UK. As anyone who does the same will know, on a caravan holiday, you tend to see your fair share of bad weather and rainy days.

A caravan is a small place, so I would get outside no matter the weather and explore the campsites, which were usually on farms. I always remember, one farmer letting me milk their goat, which was so much fun. Looking back, I don't think I even knew that goats milk existed, so it really opened my eyes and made me want to know more about all things nature and animals.

What was your reaction when you first heard this site would be turned into a nature reserve?

I was so excited. The fields were an agri-desert really, being ploughed, treated, and replanted repeatedly. It is fantastic that they can rest a while, be allowed to be wilder, and fill with wildlife once again.

Since rewilding began, what changes have you seen at the site?

Before rewilding started, the main wildlife here were deer and large groups of geese who seemed to be gathering before they migrate south.

The different types of plants that have emerged from the soil have been surprising. Such a wide variety! The land seemed suppressed before and the way it has burst into life is quite life-affirming.

In addition, the flooding has reduced significantly, as the plant life and lack of drill lines seems to hold the water better.

This, of course, has provided a space for vertebrates and invertebrates to thrive, meaning the whole place is teeming. I'm sure everyone is loving the changes as they walk through.

What are some of your favourite species/wildlife to see in this area?

The owls around here are really active. Lots of twit-twoing at night, which I love. I have really noticed more numbers and activity since the fields have been allowed to rewild. Numbers of birds of prey are noticeably up – especially sparrowhawks and owls – but the owls are certainly my favourite!

For more information about visiting see: derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/wild-whittington.

Raising a Glass for Wildlife



Since 2019 Derbyshire Wildlife Trust has been proud to partner with White Peak Distillery, working together to protect and restore vital habitats for wildlife. We are thrilled to announce an exciting collaboration with the limited-edition batch of the Shining Cliff Riverside Gin.

Jenny Kril, Living Rivers Officer from Derbyshire Wildlife Trust noted, that “The River Derwent has been a vital resource for business and industry for hundreds of years and remains so to this day. It is so great to see a business such as White Peak Distillery working alongside nature and supporting the restoration of such an important river.

The ‘Riverside Gin’ is distilled with an array of plants foraged from along the banks of the Derwent and highlights a major threat to our rivers – Himalayan Balsam. This invasive plant may help produce amazing gin; however, it outcompetes our native flora and leaves riverbanks bare in winter, leading to increased erosion.

Our aim is to eradicate Himalayan Balsam from our county, and we are grateful to White Peak Distillery for raising awareness of this issue and for supporting the work of the Trust.”

There are just 80 bottles of this limited-edition ‘Riverside Gin’, and all proceeds from the sales (after alcohol duty and VAT) go to the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.

The Riverside Gin is available exclusively for click and collect from White Peak Distillery Derwent Mills Matlock Road, Ambergate DE56 2HE.

Find out more and order yours at: whitepeakdistillery.co.uk/product/dwt-riverside-gin/

SCAN ME



SAVE THE DATE

Notification of
Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's

63RD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 27th
September 2025

Common Farm, Spanker Lane,
Nether Heage, DE56 2AT

We are happy to notify you that our Annual General Meeting will take place on Saturday 27th September at Common Farm, Nether Heage.

There will be a day of activities, including walks, crafts and Forest School from 10.30am. The formal AGM proceedings will start at 1pm.

Below is a brief agenda of what can be expected

- Find out about our ambitious plans to do more for Derbyshire's wildlife!
- Approval of 2024 AGM minutes
- Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2025
- Appointment of the Trust's auditors
- Election of committee
- Any other business / Question and Answer session

For more information and to register your attendance please see:

derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wilder-derbyshire

You are kindly asked to submit any questions by email to enquiries@derbyshirewt.co.uk before 8th September 2025.

The full annual report and supporting documents will be available and emailed to all members in advance of the meeting.

If you require information in another accessible format or via post please email: enquiries@derbyshirewt.co.uk or call 01773 881188 so we can ensure the communications reach you.





Derbyshire
Wildlife Trust

Play our lottery

to support our work
and you could win

£25,000



We've partnered with Unity to launch a lottery to support our work across Derbyshire. Every entry directly supports us, and the maximum prize each week is **£25,000**.

**PRIZE DRAW
EVERY
FRIDAY!**

derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/lottery

SCAN ME



MIX

Paper | Supporting
responsible forestry
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